



Clare County Development Plan 2023–2029

Volume 1 Written Statement

Interim Version

- Updated to incorporate Section
31 Ministerial Direction

April 2023



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL



Clare County Development Plan 2023- 2029
Volume 1

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 Introduction and Vision	3
1.0 Introduction	4
1.1 Legislative Requirements of a County Development Plan	4
1.2 Preparation Process for the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029	6
1.3 Format and Content of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029	8
1.4 Profile of County Clare	11
1.5 A Vision for County Clare	12
1.6 Goals	12
1.7 The Role of Local Government and the County Development Plan	16
1.8 Proper Planning and Sustainable Development	16
1.9 Monitoring and Progress	16
1.10 Office of the Planning Regulator	17
Chapter 2 Climate Action	18
2.0 Introduction	20
2.1 Strategic Aims	21
2.2 Statutory Context	21
2.3 Policy Context	23
2.4 Climate Change	31
2.5 Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience	32
2.6 Climate Adaptation Strategy	34
2.7 Climate Action Strategy	36
2.8 Flood Risk Management	39
2.9 Energy Decarbonisation, Efficiency and Conservation	44
Chapter 3 Core Strategy	53
3.0 Introduction	54
3.1 Core Strategy	54
3.2 Strategic Aims	55
3.3 Relevant Plans, Policies and Strategies	55
3.4 Settlement Hierarchy	58
3.5 Conclusion	71

Chapter 4 Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy	74
4.0 Introduction	75
4.1 Development Plan Aims	75
4.2 Settlement Strategy	75
4.3 Implementation and Monitoring of Settlement Policy	102
Chapter 5 Housing	105
5.0 Introduction	106
5.1 Strategic Aims	106
5.2 Housing in County Clare	107
Chapter 6 Economic Development	122
6.0 Introduction	123
6.1 Strategic Aims	123
6.2 Economic Development and Enterprise	124
6.3 Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan	127
6.4 Clare Local Economic and Community Plan	128
6.5 Atlantic Economic Corridor	128
6.6 Economic Development in Ennis	129
6.7 Economic Development in Shannon	130
6.8 Higher Education Institutes, the Knowledge Economy and Access to Talent	132
6.9 University of Limerick – Clare Campus	136
6.10 Shannon Estuary	137
6.11 Moneypoint Power Station	138
6.12 Research and Innovation	138
6.13 Clare Digital Hub Network	139
6.14 Sustainable Design and Working Environments	140
6.15 Availability of Land and Infrastructure	141
6.16 Brownfield and Infill Sites	141
6.17 Ancillary Services	142
6.18 Energy	142
6.19 Green Technology and the Circular Economy	143
6.20 Agricultural Development	144
6.21 Rural Enterprise	144
6.22 The Food Industry	145
6.23 Craft/Creative Industries	145
6.24 Home-Based Economic Activity and Remote Working	146
6.25 The Film Industry	147
6.26 Retail Developments	147
6.27 Tourism Developments	147
6.28 Data Centres	148

Chapter 7 Retail	151
7.0 Introduction	152
7.1 Strategic Aims	152
7.2 Strategy	152
7.3 Level and Form of Retail Activity	156
7.4 Town and Village Centre Retailing	161
7.5 Other Forms of Retail	164
Chapter 8 Rural Development and Natural Resources	168
8.0 Introduction	169
8.1 Strategic Aims	169
8.2 Strategy	162
8.3 Natural Resources	177
Chapter 9 Tourism	182
9.0 Introduction	183
9.1 Strategic Aims	184
9.2 Strategy	184
9.3 Sub-County Tourism Development	200
Chapter 10 Sustainable Communities	211
10.0 Introduction	212
10.1 Strategic Aims	212
10.2 Sustainable and Inclusive Communities	212
10.3 Local Community Development Committee	213
10.4 Social and Community Engagement	214
10.5 Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society	214
10.6 Universal Accessibility	215
10.7 Age-Friendly County	216
10.8 Community Facilities	217
10.9 Community Gardens and Allotments	218
10.10 Social Infrastructure	218
10.11 Arts, Culture and Language	218
10.12 Physical Recreation and Active Living	219
10.13 Recreational Routes	221
10.14 Countryside Recreation	222
10.15 Public Rights of Way	223
10.16 Play Facilities	223
10.17 Educational Services	224
10.18 Dual Use of Community Facilities	228
10.19 Digital Hubs	228
10.20 Healthcare and Wellbeing	228
10.21 The Library Service	230

10.22 Burial Ground & Crematoria	230
Chapter 11 Physical Infrastructure etc	232
11.0 Introduction	234
11.1 Strategic Aims	234
11.2 Access and Movement	235
11.3 Water Resources	265
11.4 Water and Wastewater Services	269
11.5 Waste Management	279
11.6 Noise, Air and Light Pollution	283
11.7 SEVESO – Major Accidents Directive	285
11.8 Energy and Communications	286
Chapter 12 Shannon Estuary	296
12.0 Introduction	297
12.1 Strategic Aims	299
12.2 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary	299
12.3 Shipping and Navigation	308
12.4 Harnessing the Energy Resource of the Shannon Estuary	309
12.5 Tourism on the Shannon Estuary	310
12.6 Estuary Settlements	312
12.7 The Estuary Islands	313
12.8 Aviation	313
12.9 Commercial Fishing / Aquaculture on the Estuary	314
12.10 Maritime Research, Education and Training	315
12.11 Environment	317
12.12 Water-Borne Transport	318
12.13 Marina Developments	318
Chapter 13 Marine and Coastal Zone Management	321
13.0 Introduction	322
13.1 Strategic Aims	323
13.2 Management of the Marine and Coastal Area	323
13.3 Environmental Designations in Coastal Areas	323
13.4 Management of the Coastal Zone	324
13.5 Maritime Spatial Planning	324
13.6 Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)	327
13.7 Coastal and Estuarine Transportation	328
13.8 Renewable Energy	329
13.9 The Fishing Industry and Seafood Sector	330
13.10 Aquaculture	331

13.11	Shellfish Designations	332
13.12	Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers	332
13.13	Coastal Marina Developments	334
13.14	Coastal Erosion and Flood Defence	334
13.15	Coastal Squeeze	338
13.16	Beaches, Sand Dunes, Reefs and Shorelines	338
13.17	EU Bathing Water Directive	340
13.18	Island Development	340
Chapter 14 Landscape		342
14.0	Introduction	343
14.1	Strategic Aims	343
14.2	Evolution of Landscape Management in County Clare	343
14.3	Clare's Living Landscapes	347
14.4	Seascape Character Areas	354
14.5	Views and Prospects	355
14.6	Applications for Single Houses in the Countryside	356
Chapter 15 Biodiversity, Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure		358
15.0	Introduction	359
15.1	Strategic Aims	359
15.2	Natural Heritage and Biodiversity	360
15.3	Green Infrastructure and Climate Change	386
Chapter 16 Architectural and Cultural Heritage		389
16.0	Introduction	390
16.1	Strategic Aims	390
16.2	Context	390
16.3	Architectural Heritage	391
16.4	Archaeological Heritage	396
16.5	Cultural Heritage	400
Chapter 17 Towns and Villages		403
17.0	Introduction	404
17.1	Strategic Aims	404
17.2	Town and Village Consolidation, Renewal and Regeneration	404

Chapter 18 Design and Placemaking	415
18.0 Introduction	416
18.1 Strategic Aims	416
18.2 The Design Process	416
18.3 Strategy	419
18.4 Regulations and Guidelines	428
18.5 Collaboration	429
Chapter 19 Land Use and Zoning	431
19.0 Introduction	432
19.1. Strategic Aims	432
19.2 Context	432
19.3 Land Use Zoning	433
19.4. Nature of Zonings	434
19.5 Zoning Matrix	439
Chapter 20 Implementation and Monitoring	441
20.0 Introduction	442
20.1. Implementation and Monitoring	442
20.2 Plan Evaluating and Reporting	443
20.3 Environmental Monitoring and SEA	444
Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines	445
Appendix 2 Indicative Land Use Zoning Matrix	473
Appendix 3 Natural Heritage Sites in County Clare	481
Appendix 4 Architectural Conservation Areas	506
Appendix 5 Scenic Routes	515
Appendix 6 Public Rights of Way	517
Appendix 7 Plans, Policies and Guidelines	520
Appendix 8 Housing Supply Target	526
Appendix 9 Implementation and Monitoring	527



Acronyms

AA	Appropriate Assessment
ACA	Architectural Conservation Area
BGI	Blue Green Infrastructure
CCC	Clare County Council
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CDP	County Development Plan
DES	Department of Education and Skills
GHG	Green House Gas
GNI	Gas Networks Ireland
HEP	Hydro Electric Power
HNDA	Housing Need Demand Assessment
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
IWEA	Irish Wind Energy Association
LA	Local Authority
LAP	Local Area Plan
LAWPRO	Local Authorities Water Programme
LNDR	Limerick Northern Distributor Road
LSMATS	Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy
LTP	Local Transport Plan
LDA	Land Development Agency
MASP	Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan
MPDM	Marine Planning and Development Management
NBS	Nature Based Solutions
NHA	Natural Heritage Areas
NIR	Natura Impact Report
NIS	Natura Impact Statement
NPF	National Planning Framework
NTA	National Transport Authority
NWRM	Natural Water Retention Measures
OPW	Office of Public Works
ORE	Offshore Renewable Energy
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
RPS	Record of Protected Structures
RRDF	Rural Regeneration and Development fund
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SDG	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
SDZ	Strategic Development Zone
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SFRA	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
SFPC	Shannon Foynes Port Company
SIFP	Shannon Integrated Framework Plan
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPPR	Specific Planning Policy Requirement
SRA	Southern Regional Assembly



SUDS	Sustainable Urban Drainage Solutions
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TFI	Transport for Ireland

Chapter 1 Introduction and Vision

This chapter sets out the background to the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 with regard to legal requirements, the profile of County Clare, the vision for the county and the goals established to realise that vision.

Chapter 1 Table of Contents:

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Legislative Requirements of a County Development Plan
 - 1.1.1 Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)
 - 1.1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment
 - 1.1.3 Appropriate Assessment
 - 1.1.4 Flood Risk Assessment
- 1.2 Preparation Process for the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029
- 1.3 Format and Content of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029
- 1.4 Profile of County Clare
- 1.5 A Vision for County Clare
- 1.6 Goals
- 1.7 The Role of Local Government and the County Development Plan
- 1.8 Proper Planning and Sustainable Development
- 1.9 Monitoring and Progress
- 1.10 Office of the Planning Regulator

1.0 Introduction

This Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 sets out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the functional area of Clare County Council over a 6 year period. Development Plans comprise a written statement supported by maps indicating the development objectives for the area in question, including a number of mandatory objectives. Clare County Council is required to prepare and adopt a County Development Plan every 6 years. Not later than 4 years after the adoption of the Development Plan, the Council is required to review its existing Development Plan and commence the preparation of a new one.

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 covers the functional area of Clare County Council. It replaces the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (as varied) and is the eighth Clare County Development Plan since 1964.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 established a Municipal District system of local administration. There are four Municipal Districts in County Clare, namely: Ennis, Shannon, Killaloe and West Clare. This system of local governance is reflected in the structure of this plan, most particularly in Volume 3 Settlement Plans, where settlements are ordered according to their relevant Municipal District.

1.1 Legislative Requirements of a County Development Plan

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (as amended 2011) and Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive.

1.1.1 Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended)

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires a County Development Plan to set out an overall strategy for the proper planning and sustainable development of the county. It also requires the inclusion of a Core Strategy, which shows that the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with national and regional development objectives set out in the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy and the Housing Supply Target Methodology. The plan must also include a number of mandatory objectives as prescribed in legislation.

1.1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is the process by which environmental considerations are required to be fully integrated into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes, and in this case the preparation of the County Development Plan. Article 1 of the EU Directive 2001/42/EC states *“The objective of the SEA process is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of specified plans and programmes with a*

view to promoting sustainable development, by ensuring that, in accordance with this Directive, an environmental assessment is carried out of certain plans and programmes which are likely to have significant effects on the environment”.

It should be noted that results from the SEA process must be fully considered and integrated into the preparation and making of the County Development Plan by:

- Carrying out consultations with the public and prescribed environmental authorities;
- Preparing an Environmental Report in conjunction with the preparation of the Draft Development Plan;
- Integrating environmental considerations into policy formulation;
- Publishing information on the decision in conjunction with the adoption of the development plan (SEA Statement);
- Publishing information on the decision;
- Monitoring the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans/programmes.

In accordance with the requirements of the SEA Regulations, this County Development Plan includes an SEA Environmental Report contained in Volume 10.

1.1.3 Appropriate Assessment

The Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora) formed a basis for the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). Similarly, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are legislated for under the Birds Directive - Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (codified version). SACs and SPAs are also referred to as European site(s).

The EU Directive on Habitats (92/43/EEC), as transposed into Irish law through the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 477 of 2011) and Part XAB of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010, requires the assessment as to whether the implementation of a plan is likely to have significant effects on any sites designated under the European Commission’s Natura 2000 network of sites (hereafter “European sites”). These sites are designated based on the presence of certain habitats and species that are deemed to be of international importance. The Irish Government and local planning authorities have a legal obligation to protect these sites.

Under Article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, appropriate assessment must be undertaken for any plan or project that is likely to have a significant effect on the conservation objectives of a European site(s). This includes the preparation of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

Screening for Appropriate Assessment of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 was carried out by the competent authority to assess, in view of best scientific knowledge, if the plan, individually or in combination with other plans or projects was likely to have significant

effects on a European site. The screening indicated that appropriate assessment was required and therefore a Natura Impact Report was prepared.

Appropriate assessment is an evaluation of the potential impacts of a plan on the conservation objectives of a European site, and the development, where necessary, of mitigation or avoidance measures to preclude negative effects. Principally the purpose of appropriate assessment is to identify the implications of implementing the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 for the conservation objectives of a European site within the plan area and whether there will be adverse effects on the integrity of that site.

It is necessary to incorporate or assimilate any mitigation measures or measures proposed to avoid or ameliorate the (potential) adverse effects on European sites into the policy or detail of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. More importantly, notwithstanding the proposed mitigation measures or other proposals to avoid impacts contained in the Natura Impact Report, if a development plan has the potential for a significant adverse impact on the integrity of a European site, it cannot be adopted unless it is established that there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI), including those of a social or economic nature, and/or reasons of human health and public safety.

The Natura Impact Report is contained in Volume 10 of this development plan.

1.1.4 Flood Risk Assessment

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) indicates that development plans may include objectives *“for carrying out flood risk assessment for the purpose of regulating, restricting and controlling development in areas at risk of flooding (whether inland or coastal)”*.

‘The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ made flood risk assessment an integral and leading element of planning functions and requires development plans to establish the flood risk assessment requirements for their functional areas. Local authorities are required to take all practical steps to ensure the prior identification of any areas at risk of flooding in the plan area.

In compliance with these requirements, Clare County Council has carried out a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) as part of the process of preparing the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. The SFRA is contained in Volume 10 of this development plan.

1.2 Preparation Process for the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The previous Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 was adopted by the Elected Members of Clare County Council on the 19th of December 2016. Formal notice (Section 11 Notice) of the commencement of the review of the existing Plan and the preparation of a new Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 was advertised in the Clare Champion on the 18th of September 2020. The Planning Authority also issued notifications via Clare County Council’s

social media pages. A specific webpage documenting the process of the preparation of the new Plan was also launched on the Clare County Council website.

The Council published an Issues Paper and a video to encourage public participation in the preparation of the new Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 and to initiate public debate on the broad planning and development matters that should be included in the new development plan. Written submissions or observations were invited.

In accordance with the requirements of Section 11 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) the Chief Executive prepared a report on the outcome of the statutory consultation process which included his opinion on the issues raised in the submissions received and his recommendations on the policies to be included in the development plan. The Chief Executive's Report was submitted to the Elected Members on 15th January 2021 for their consideration. This report listed the persons or bodies who made submissions or observations and summarised the issues raised in both the submissions and during the consultation process. The Chief Executive's Report also set out his recommendations on the policies to be included in the new Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028.

After considering the Chief Executive's Report, the Elected Members issued directions to the Chief Executive regarding the preparation of the development plan. This process continued until the 25th of March 2021 pursuant to Section 11(4)(e) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

In July 2021 new legislation was enacted in response to disruption caused to the plan making process due to Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions. The legislation as set out in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2021 and Section 11D of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, enables the Planning Authority to extend the duration of the existing county development plan to provide for an additional period to review the existing development plan and to prepare a new development plan.

In accordance with section 9A(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the Elected Members of the Planning Authority approved, by resolution at a Special Council Meeting on 28th July 2021, to avail of the provisions of the new legislation and to initiate the process to extend the period, by up to 7 months, to review the existing County Development Plan and to prepare a new development plan. The reason for the initiation of this process was due to the disruption resulting from restrictions introduced as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic on the plan preparation process for the making of a new Clare County Development Plan.

Following a process to extend the duration of the existing Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, as varied, including a public consultation phase which commenced on the 1st of October 2021 in accordance with section 11D(3)(b) and 11D(4) and following consideration of the Chief Executive's Report by the Elected Members, the decision to extend the duration of the existing Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, as varied, was made at the full Council Meeting held on the 8th November 2021. This allowed for an additional period of up to 7 months to review the current development plan and to prepare a new Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

The Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 was prepared having regard to the directions of the Elected Members.

1.3 Format and Content of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 takes into account the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES), planning guidelines, strategies and policy documents. It is also informed by specific national and global environmental issues that are accepted as being critical to the formulation and implementation of sustainable development. These include climate change, flooding, renewable and alternative energy. In addition, the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 has been prepared in compliance with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) and the EU Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC).

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 has regard to other relevant local policy documents. The objectives contained in the County Development Plan complement the goals and aims of the Clare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021, the Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 and the Clare County Council Corporate Plan. Moreover, the development plan commits to equality, accessibility and gender proofing throughout the preparation of the plan, policy formation and its implementation.

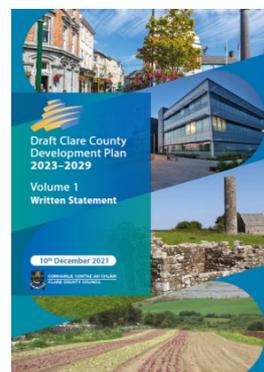
The format of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 reflects the challenges and opportunities facing the county over the period of the plan as well as the specific and unique issues pertaining to land-use and the socio-economic development of the county.

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is the primary policy document for planning policy throughout the functional area of Clare County Council. The plan also contains settlement plans for all of the towns and villages in the county, with the exception of Shannon town. The Metropolitan Town of Shannon has its own dedicated Local Area Plan, Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 (as amended), which contains the zoning map for the town. A new Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan will be prepared for Shannon Town and Environs during the life of this plan.

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 consists of 10 volumes, as follows:

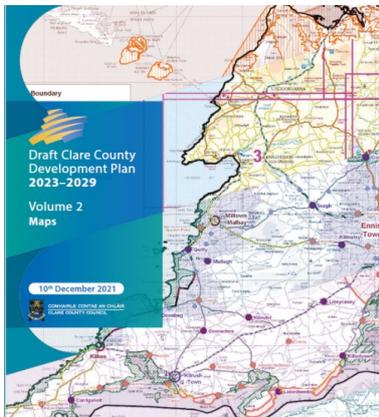
Volume 1 - Written Statement

This contains the written text and constitutes the main body of the document outlining the vision, core strategy and objectives for the different policy areas addressed by the development plan. The development plan contains the mandatory objectives as required by the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), as specified in Section 1.1.1 above.



Volume 2 - Maps

This volume contains all the large maps, on a county scale, referred to in Volume 1 and which give effect to the designations as contained in the written statement. Also contained in this volume are settlement flood maps for the towns and villages which are affected by flood risk as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment in Volume 10c.



Volume 3 – Municipal District Written Statement and Maps

This volume contains individual settlement plans and land use zoning details for each of the towns and villages in the municipal districts of the county as follows:

Volume 3(a) – Ennis Municipal District Written Statement and Maps

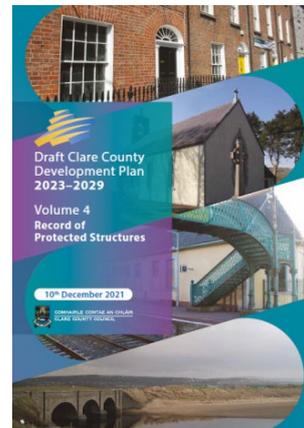
Volume 3(b) – Shannon Municipal District, including the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, Written Statement and Maps

Volume 3(c) – Killaloe Municipal District Written Statement and Maps

Volume 3(d) – West Clare Municipal District Written Statement and Maps

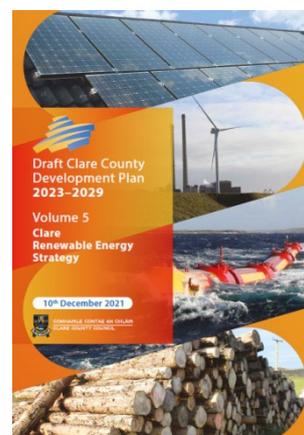
Volume 4 – Record of Protected Structures

A Protected Structure is a structure that is considered to be of special interest from an architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social and technical point of view. Details of all Protected Structures in County Clare are entered in this Record of Protected Structures.



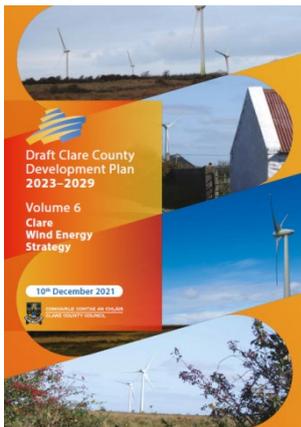
Volume 5 – Clare Renewable Energy Strategy

This volume outlines the renewable energy resource that is deliverable within County Clare including micro-renewable energy and energy storage.



Volume 6 – Clare Wind Energy Strategy

This volume comprises a detailed county-wide Wind Energy Strategy, supplemented by maps which set out Clare County Council’s strategy for informing wind energy development, having regard to economic, environmental and visual issues.



Volume 7 – Clare Retail Strategy

This volume comprises the Retail Strategy for County Clare, which is intended to provide a strategic county-wide approach to achieving a balance in retail development.



Volume 8 – Clare Housing Strategy

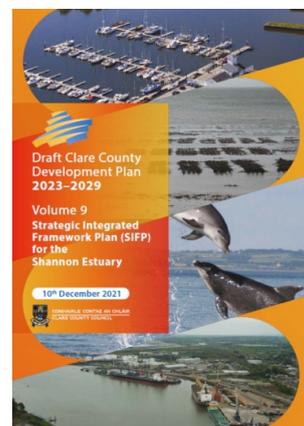
This volume comprises a Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment, prepared in accordance with Part V of the

Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).



Volume 9 – Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary

This volume comprises the SIFP, an inter-jurisdictional land and marine-based framework to guide the future development and management of the Shannon Estuary.



Volume 10 – Environmental Appraisal of the Plan

This volume of the plan comprises a suite of environmental assessments, in full compliance with the requirement of the Habitats Directive, the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive and the Floods Directive as follows:

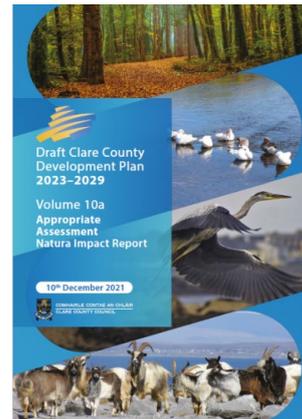
Volume 10a Natura Impact Report

Volume 10b(i) Strategic Environmental Assessment – Non-Technical Summary

Volume 10b(ii) Strategic Environmental Assessment – Environmental Report

Volume 10b(iii) Strategic Environmental Assessment - Statement

Volume 10c Strategic Flood Risk Assessment



1.4 Profile of County Clare

County Clare is situated on the West coast of Ireland in the province of Munster, covering an area of some 318,784 hectares (787,715 acres). It is bounded by the counties of Galway to the North, Tipperary to the East and Limerick to the South. Its natural boundaries comprise Galway Bay to the North, River Shannon and Lough Derg to the East and the Shannon Estuary to the South.

The county has a diverse topography, varying from bare limestone pavement to estuarial mudflats and from high Atlantic cliffs to inland lakes and waterways. The county's coastline is 360km in length. Much of the county has underlying limestone strata which are highly permeable. County Clare is noted for its agriculture, tourism and beautiful landscapes. It is home to the Burren National Park and is renowned for both its physical and cultural heritage.

Ennis is the County Town and the administrative centre of County Clare. It is also designated as a Key Town in the National Planning Framework (NPF). Shannon is a large Metropolitan Town in the south of the county and is a major industrial and employment centre, not only for County Clare but for the region as a whole. Shannon, along with a portion of south east Clare, forms part of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. In the remainder of the county, Kilrush, Ennistymon and Scarriff act as service centres for their surrounding hinterlands, supported by a network of other towns and villages.

County Clare's air, road and rail transport facilities are unique in the region. Shannon International Airport caters for almost 2 million passengers per annum providing flights directly to the UK, US and Europe, with worldwide connectivity. In 2009, the US Customs Pre-Clearance facility was opened, providing more efficient transfers to the US for passengers. The County is well served by strategic road access with the M18 motorway which bisects the county linking to Galway, Limerick and beyond. The Ennis Bypass (N85) allows traffic travel via National Secondary Routes. The planned Killaloe bypass and new bridge crossing and the Ennistymon new bridge crossing will greatly improve accessibility and quality of life in these towns and act as gateways to the East and West of the county. The Western Rail Corridor already provides for daily commuter rail transport between Ennis/Limerick and Dublin and to

Athenry and Galway. The National Development Plan 2021-2030 provides funding over the next ten years to support the further development of a new Limerick commuter rail network including new stations on each of the historical rail lines and the provision of a rail link connecting Shannon with the Limerick commuter rail network, the detail of which is to be set out in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.

Marine access and transport are provided for at Moneypoint, Killimer, Shannon International Airport and harbours along the Atlantic coastline. However, significant potential exists for greater accessibility using the deep waters of the Shannon Estuary.

Commerce and trade are the greatest sources of employment in the county. Outside of the industrial/business, retail and administrative employment centres of Shannon, Ennis and Kilrush, tourism and agriculture are two of the primary industries in County Clare. The location of several higher education facilities within and near the county provides easy access to higher education and provides significant opportunity to enhance the knowledge economy in the county.

The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 seeks to develop and improve the social, economic, cultural and environmental assets and quality of life of the county. In order to give effect to and a common understanding of the purpose and scope of the county Development Plan, it is critical to identify a common vision for County Clare.

1.5 A Vision for County Clare

That County Clare would develop as a place to be part of and proud of, where urban and rural communities enjoy a high quality of life, work practice choice, inclusivity and service access and so that the county is a dynamic, resilient, connected and internationally competitive location for innovation and investment and is a national leader in climate action, creativity, culture, heritage, tourism and environmental management.

1.6 Goals

The following 20 chapters set out the planning policy framework within which the vision set out above will be realised by 2029. Each chapter identifies a key goal supported by strategic aims and objectives. It is through the delivery of these goals that this common vision for County Clare will be realised. The key goals for County Clare are:

Goal I: A county that is resilient to climate change, plans for and adapts to climate change and flood risk, is the national leader in renewable energy generation, facilitates a low carbon future, supports energy efficiency and conservation and enables the decarbonisation of our lifestyles and economy.

Goal II: A county that drives local and regional sustainable growth by harnessing the potential of its unique location, quality of life, natural resources and other competitive advantages.

Goal III: A county with strong and balanced urban and rural areas providing key services and a good quality of life and where people with social or economic requirements to live in the countryside are accommodated.

Goal IV: A county with high quality housing at appropriate locations throughout the county, ensuring the development of a range of house types, sizes and tenures to accommodate differing household needs, promoting sustainable communities, social integration and inclusion, while facilitating a sense of place.

Goal V: A county in which jobs and people are brought together and where the sustainable growth of employment, indigenous enterprise and economic activity is pursued proactively across all economic sectors throughout the county.

Goal VI: A county with viable and vibrant town and village centres, that have shopping areas and markets at appropriate scales and locations and which function to serve their communities and rural hinterlands.

Goal VII: A county with diverse and strong rural communities and economy, where its natural resources are sustainably managed in a manner that is compatible with the fragility of rural areas and the existing quality of life.

Goal VIII: A county in which tourism growth continues to play a major role in the future development of the county; a county which is the gateway to the West, delivering tourism experiences which reflect its strong commitment to sustainability, connectivity, innovation and new approaches to doing business; and a place that is globally recognised as a sustainable destination and where the benefits of tourism are spread across the county throughout the seasons.

Goal IX: A county where healthy and sustainable communities are developed and integrated with the timely delivery of a wide range of community, educational and cultural facilities and where, through a commitment to equality, participation, accessibility and social inclusion, the county develops as a unique location with an enhanced quality of life for its citizens and visitors.

Goal X: A county that supports strong economic growth and a high quality of life for all residents through the provision of efficient and robust physical infrastructure whilst having regard to environmental responsibilities and complying with European and national legislation.

Goal XI: A county that builds on the strategic location and natural resources of the Shannon Estuary by facilitating and maximising its potential for various forms of development while

managing the estuarine and natural environment in full compliance with all relevant EU Directives.

Goal XII: A county that maximises and manages the economic, social and recreational potential of the Atlantic Coastline and Shannon Estuary while protecting the coastal zone and its resources and adapting to and managing the challenges of climate change including flooding and sea-level rise.

Goal XIII: A county of 'living landscapes' where people live, work, recreate and visit while respecting, managing and taking pride in the unique landscape of the county.

Goal XIV: A county that protects and enhances its unique natural heritage and biodiversity and recognises the potential for sustainable green infrastructure development, while promoting and developing its cultural, educational and eco-tourism potential in a sustainable manner.

Goal XV: A county that affords protection and conservation to buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and recognises them as a social, cultural and economic asset to the county.

Goal XVI: A county with a strong and vibrant network of towns and villages that provide a wide range of services and a high quality of life for residents of the county.

Goal XVII: A county that promotes buildings, urban spaces and public realm of the highest quality and ensures all development adheres to the principles of good design and contributes to the establishment of distinctive buildings and areas with a 'sense of place'.

Goal XVIII: A county where the overall strategic objectives of the County Development Plan are translated into settlement plans and local area plans containing detailed land-use zonings and master-planning of neighbourhoods in an evidence-based, plan-led approach with a focus on ensuring a high quality of life.

Goal XIX: A county that manages and monitors the county level implementation of the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial Economic Strategy, national plans and guidelines to ensure that quality of life, sustainability, climate action, resilience and inclusivity are the fundamental principles of the future sustainable development of the county.

Goal XX: A county that plays a fundamental role in the transition from a linear to a circular economy, through being responsible for key policies in public services that affect citizens' wellbeing, economic growth and environmental quality, and by fostering the linkages to transition from linear model to a circular model which keeps resources in use for as long as possible.

In addition to the above list of goals, outlined below are five Strategic County Outcomes which are entirely interrelated and which, in combination, can deliver the overall Development Plan Vision over the lifetime of the Plan. Creation of a liveable, connected and compact county will in turn lead to a climate resilient sustainable county which will be inclusive and create opportunities for economic growth and a good quality of life.

Table 1 Five Strategic Development Plan Principles

<p>Quality of Life</p>	<p>Mental and physical health is affected by the environment in which we live. Access to sustainable transport, housing, quality places, green space and community infrastructure can have a significant influence on the quality of life, health and wellbeing of all.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>The concept of sustainable development can be defined as “development which meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. Sustainable development is one of the major challenges facing society. How and where we live, work and visit make demands on the earth’s resources. This Plan adopts the principle of sustainability by promoting and encouraging the integration of economic, environmental, social and cultural considerations into policies and objectives to ensure that the needs of urban and rural communities are met. Any reference to development in this plan should be considered to refer to sustainable development.</p>
<p>Climate Action</p>	<p>It is recognised that the County Development Plan has a key role in supporting the delivery of meaningful action on climate change through the implementation of the National Planning Framework compact growth agenda at the local level. The integration of land-use and transportation and the sustainable management of environmental resources including biodiversity are critical. Climate action is thus an important strategic objective of the County Development Plan which is reflected by the introduction of a new stand-alone Chapter relating to Climate Action (see Chapter 2) in addition to other climate action-related objectives which permeate the Plan. The County Development Plan, in conjunction with the Clare County Council Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 in effect provides a framework for the transition towards a low carbon and more climate resilient county.</p>
<p>Resilience</p>	<p>The Covid-19 Pandemic has most recently shown the importance of resilience and adaptability. Resilience is a principle that also underpins the Plan and is described as ‘the ability of a system, community or society exposed to hazards to resist, absorb,</p>

	<p>accommodate and recover from the effects of a hazard in a timely and efficient manner, including through the preservation and restoration of its essential basic structures and functions’. (United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), 2009). It is built into the strategic policies and recommendations of each of the cross-cutting themes: quality of life, sustainability, climate action, and inclusivity.</p>
<p>Inclusivity</p>	<p>Inclusivity affects the wellbeing of individuals, families, social groups and communities. Creating a more socially inclusive society by alleviating social exclusion, poverty and deprivation is a major challenge. Steps towards achieving a more socially inclusive society include the provision of good quality affordable housing, community infrastructure and improving access to information and resources.</p>

1.7 The Role of Local Government and the County Development Plan

The Local Government Act 2001 (as amended) sets out the functions of local authorities. It recognises that one of the roles of a local authority is to provide a forum for the democratic representation of its citizens and to provide civic leadership for that community.

Given the extensive public consultation afforded to the making of a development plan and that its adoption is a function of the Elected Members, it has been described as a ‘contract’ between the Council and the public. This plan is therefore an agreed blueprint for the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of County Clare. It provides the platform for Clare County Council to ascertain and communicate to other public authorities the views of its citizens, in relation to those functions performed by other authorities, which affect the interests of County Clare.

1.8 Proper Planning and Sustainable Development

When making a development plan, the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires planning authorities to consider the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. While there is no definition of the term in the Act, for the purposes of this plan, proper planning and sustainable development is defined as *“achieving the correct balance of economic, social, cultural and environmental considerations in the interests of the common good and securing long term benefits to County Clare.”*

1.9 Monitoring and Progress

A development plan must be able to respond to changing circumstances within its lifetime. Regular monitoring of the Plan is important, in terms of its relationship with development pressures, varying local priorities and with changes within a wider EU and national policy context, in order for the policies and objectives of the Plan to remain effective and relevant throughout the lifetime of the Plan. The impact of policies and specific objectives should,

wherever possible, be quantified.

To provide a quality service, focused on the needs of customers/citizens during the lifetime of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, and in line with the Corporate Plan, the implementation of the development plan, and its importance in assisting applicants with planning permission, communities, statutory bodies, investors and voluntary groups will be monitored by Clare County Council.

It is a requirement under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) for a report to be prepared, two years after the making of the Plan, on the progress achieved in securing the objectives of the development plan. This progress report is necessary because, under the Act, it is the duty of the Planning Authority to *“take such steps as are in its powers as may be necessary for achieving the objectives of the development plan”*. Chapter 20 sets out further details in relation to implementation and monitoring.

The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process requires that monitoring should be carried out to identify, at an early stage, any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the Plan, with the view to taking remedial action where adverse effects have been identified. An environmental monitoring programme has been developed as part of the SEA of the Clare County Development Plan. It is based on environmental indicators which have been developed to highlight changes attributable to the plan and which have been selected to track progress towards achieving strategic environmental objectives and reaching targets, thereby enabling positive and negative impacts on the environment to be measured.

1.10 Office of the Planning Regulator

The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) was established in 2019 and oversees the enhancement of Ireland’s planning system by driving the co-ordination of planning policy implementation across national, regional and local levels, building a stronger knowledge base and ensuring regular reviews of the performance of Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála. One of the core functions of the OPR is to independently evaluate and assess statutory development plans and regional strategies, and variations to these, with a view to ensuring that the plan or strategy provides for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area concerned. The OPR may issue a Notice to the Minister recommending that a Ministerial Direction be issued. It is however the role of the Minister to issue any Direction to compel the Planning Authority to address any matter.

Chapter 2 Climate Action

Goal II: A county that is resilient to climate change, plans for and adapts to climate change and flood risk, is the national leader in renewable energy generation, facilitates a low carbon future, supports energy efficiency and conservation and enables the decarbonisation of our lifestyles and economy.

Chapter 2 Table of Contents:

2.0	Introduction
2.1	Strategic Aims
2.2	Statutory Context
2.3	Policy Context
2.3.1	International Context
2.3.2	European Context
2.3.3	National Context
2.3.4	Regional Context
2.3.5	County Clare
2.4	Climate Change
2.5	Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience
2.6	Climate Adaptation Strategy
2.6.1	Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations
2.6.2	Infrastructure and the Built Environment
2.6.3	Land Use and Development
2.6.4	Drainage and Flood Management
2.6.5	Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure
2.6.6	Community Health and Wellbeing
2.7	Climate Action Strategy
2.7.1	Biodiversity
2.7.2	Core Strategy
2.7.3	Decarbonisation Zone
2.7.4	Design and Placemaking
2.7.5	Economic Development
2.7.6	Energy Generation and Use
2.7.7	Residential Development
2.7.8	Resource Management
2.7.9	Settlement Strategy
2.7.10	Transport
2.8	Flood Risk Management
2.8.1	Storm Water Management
2.8.2	Green Infrastructure and Flood Management
2.8.3	Maintenance of Rivers and Waterways
2.9	Energy Decarbonisation, Efficiency and Conservation



- 2.9.1 Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society
- 2.9.2 Energy Efficiency and Conservation
- 2.9.3 Renewable Transport
- 2.9.4 Community Energy
- 2.9.5 Renewable Heat
- 2.9.6 Solar Energy
- 2.9.7 Bio-Energy
- 2.9.8 Micro-Generation
- 2.9.9 Micro Hydroelectric Generation
- 2.9.10 Ardnacrusa Hydroelectric Power Station

2.0 Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 2001 glossary defines climate as follows:

“Climate in a narrow sense is usually defined as the “average weather,” or more rigorously, as the statistical description in terms of the mean and variability of relevant quantities over a period ranging from months to thousands or millions of years. The classical period is 30 years, as defined by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO). These quantities are most often surface variables such as temperature, precipitation, and wind. Climate in a wider sense is the state, including a statistical description, of the climate system.”

Climate Change and the effects associated with it present major challenges for the county and can result in loss of human life and adverse impacts on the natural and built environments. The expected impacts of climate change in Ireland in the coming years include:

- Increasing average temperatures;
- More extreme weather conditions including storms and rainfall events;
- An increased likelihood of both river and coastal flooding;
- Water shortages, particularly in the east of the country;
- Changes in the type and distribution of species;
- The possible extinction of vulnerable species.

The global climate is changing at an accelerated rate and Ireland’s climate continues to warm up in line with global trends. The effects of climate change and global warming and the associated economic, environmental, and social impacts have direct and indirect consequences at the global, national, and local levels and climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of our time. In 2019, Ireland became the second country globally to declare a climate and biodiversity emergency. Extreme weather events in County Clare in recent years such as flooding, and storm surges coupled with high winds have required significant responses by the Council and the implementation of major emergency response plans. The National Climate Action Plan 2023 builds on the previous climate action plans and is the first plan to implement economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings agreed in July 2022. The updated Climate Action Plan focuses on how to achieve the required system change across society and the economy. The plan requires, by 2030, a 75% reduction in electricity sector emissions, 45% reduction in commercial/public buildings emissions, a 40% reduction in residential buildings emissions, 50% reduction in transport sector emissions, 35% reduction in industry emissions and 25% reduction in agricultural emissions. The plan requires a large-scale deployment of renewables and includes an acceleration of the delivery of onshore wind to 9GW, solar energy to 8GW and offshore wind to at least 5GW. In addition, the plan outlines support for at least 500MW of local community-based renewable energy projects and increased levels of micro-generation and small-scale generation.

In conjunction with the National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (2014), the National Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2019 and the Clare

Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, the Development Plan sets out the policies and objectives of the Council to mitigate and adapt to climate change in the county. This is complemented through an overarching objective to reduce the carbon output from developments and activities in the plan area.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 requires the national transition of Ireland to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally-sustainable and net-zero emissions country by 2050 and the preparation of Climate Action Plans by each local authority (to be updated every 5 years).

2.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives required in order to implement and to continue to progress new climate actions so as to achieve significant reductions in the carbon output of the county, to manage the risks associated with climate change and to ensure that climate change resilience and adaptation is a priority during the period of the plan and beyond. It is based on the following strategic aims:

- To work in coordination with relevant stakeholders to secure the development of low carbon residential and business properties in the plan area;
- To ensure that future development is considered and managed having regard to the risk of flooding;
- To minimise the level of flood risk to people, businesses, infrastructure, and the environment;
- To ensure that the potential effects of climate change are a key consideration in the location and design of new developments;
- To ensure that the potential risk of flooding and coastal erosion are fully assessed and taken into consideration in the identification of future development lands in the plan area; and
- To take advantage of the economic opportunities that climate adaptation will present (Moneypoint, downstream/supply chain benefits).

2.2 Statutory Context

Section 10(2)(n) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) titled 'Climate Action', sets out the statutory provisions for climate change in Ireland. This section relates to mandatory objectives for the promotion of sustainable settlement and transportation strategies in urban and rural areas, including the promotion of measures to:

- a) Address the necessity of adaptation to climate change;

- b) Reduce anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions;
- c) Reduce energy demand in response to the likelihood of increases in energy and other costs due to long-term decline in non-renewable resources; and
- d) Gain economic benefits of climate adaptation.



Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act (2021)

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 requires the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy by 2050. The Act includes the following key elements:

- This Act embeds the process of setting binding and ambitious emissions-reductions targets in law;
- The Act provides that the first two five-year carbon budgets proposed by the Climate Change Advisory Council should equate to a total reduction of 51% over the period to 2030, relative to a baseline of 2018;
- The role of the Climate Change Advisory Council has been strengthened, enabling it to propose carbon budgets to the Minister which match our ambition and international obligations;
- The government must adopt carbon budgets that are consistent with the Paris Agreement and other international obligations. All forms of greenhouse gas emissions including biogenic methane will be included in the carbon budgets, and carbon removals will be taken into account in setting budgets;

- The Government will determine, following consultation, how to apply the carbon budget across the relevant sectors, and what each sector will contribute in a given five-year period;
- Actions for each sector will be detailed in the Climate Action Plan which must be updated annually;
- Government Ministers will be responsible for achieving the legally-binding targets for their own sectoral area with each Minister accounting for their performance towards sectoral targets and actions before an Oireachtas Committee each year;
- Local Authorities must prepare individual Climate Action Plans which will include both mitigation and adaptation measures and will be updated every five years. Local Authority Development Plans must be aligned with their Climate Action Plan.

2.3 Policy Context

National, Regional and County level climate change policies and objectives in Ireland are informed by and are in accordance with related international and EU level policies which are outlined in the following sections.

2.3.1 International Context

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992)

The objective of the UNFCCC is to ‘stabilise greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent dangerous anthropogenic interference with the climate system’ and it has the ultimate aim of preventing dangerous human interference with the climate system.

Kyoto Protocol (1997)

The Kyoto Protocol implements the UNFCCC by committing industrialised countries and economies in transition to limit and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with agreed individual targets. It is based on the principle of common responsibilities and acknowledges that individual countries have different capacities in combating climate change owing to varying levels of economic development.

Paris Agreement (2015)

The Paris Agreement is a legally binding international treaty on climate change. The Agreement entered its implementation phase in 2020, and in doing so replaced the 1997 Kyoto Protocol as the framework for achievement of the objective of the UNFCCC. It established the following goals:

- Hold the global average temperature increase to well below 2°C and pursue efforts to limit the increase to 1.5°C;

- Enhance adaptive capacity and foster climate resilience and low-emission development in a manner that does not threaten food production;
- Make finance flows consistent with a pathway towards low GHG emissions and climate-resilient development.

COP 26 – 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference

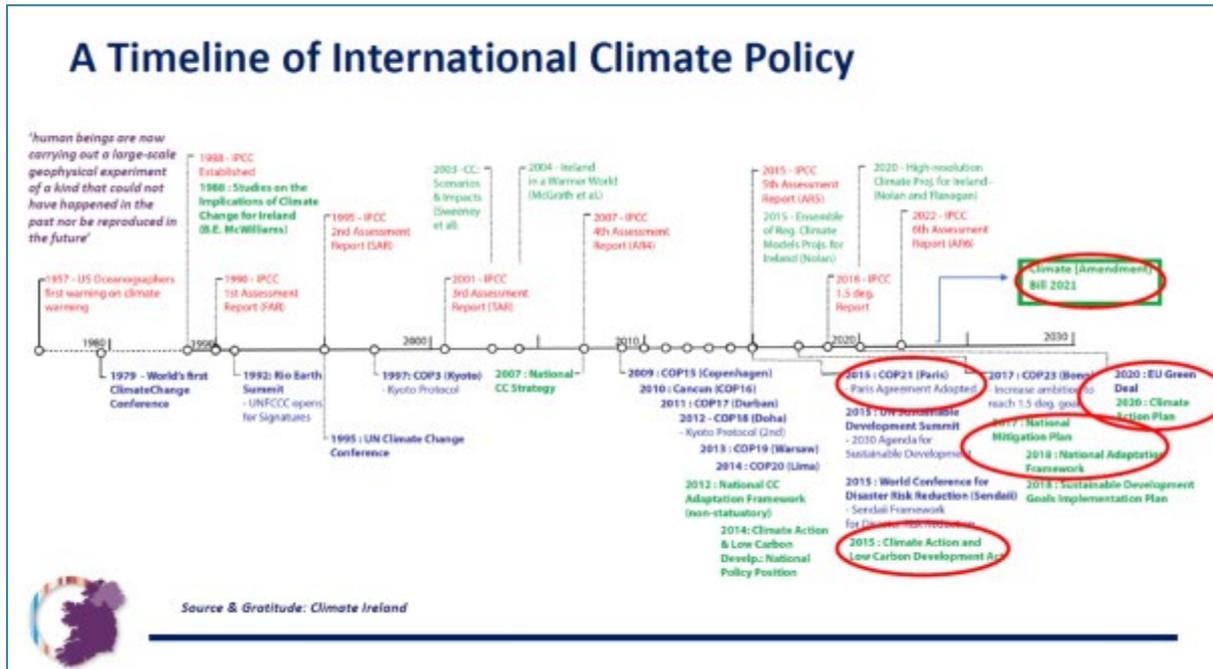
The UK hosted the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on the 31st of October 2021. The COP26 summit brought parties together to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. The two headline outcomes from COP26 were as follows:

- Signing of the Glasgow Climate Pact
- Agreeing the Paris Rulebook.

If the commitments made at Glasgow are fully implemented, warming will be kept below 2°C; and with the commitment to further action over the next decade these efforts will limit the increase to 1.5°C as agreed in Paris in 2015.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) 2015

The 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals, which were adopted by all United Nations member states, address the economic, environmental and social challenges that countries must address by 2030 so as to achieve inclusive, people-centred, and sustainable development. There is a recognition within the goals that the ending of poverty (and other deprivations) must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth (all whilst addressing climate change and working to preserve our oceans and forests). In particular SDG 13 refers to the need to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.



2.3.2 European Context

EU Adaptation Strategy 2013

This strategy sought to make Europe more climate resilient. By taking a coherent approach and providing for improved coordination, it aimed to enhance the preparedness and capacity of all governance levels to respond to the impacts of climate change. The strategy has been a reference point to prepare Europe for the climate impacts to come, at all levels.

EU Green Deal (2020)

The European Green Deal is a set of policy initiatives by the European Commission with the overarching aim of making Europe climate neutral in 2050. The initial climate action initiatives under the Green Deal include:

- A proposal to introduce European Climate Law to enshrine the 2050 climate-neutrality objective in EU law;
- European Climate Pact to engage citizens and all parts of society in climate action;
- 2030 Climate Target Plan to further reduce net greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% and towards 55% by 2030 (as opposed to 60% by 2050 under the Paris-Agreement);
- To achieve a Just Transition to the decarbonisation of our industries.

The Just Transition approach, which was included in Ireland's Climate Law enacted in 2021, emphasises a coordinated, long-term, and multi-pronged response involving social partners, industry, and Government. In the context of the implementation of climate change response measures in meeting emissions targets and adapting to the negative impacts of climate

change, the Just Transition approach aims to ensure the creation of decent work, greener quality jobs, improving quality of life and better place making. It also aims to ensure that the opportunities associated with moving to a zero-carbon economy are maximised, while minimising negative environmental and socio-economic impacts. Finally in terms of equality, the Just Transition approach is based on fairness, equality, and inclusion, and provides a mechanism by which nobody gets left behind.

EU Climate and Energy Framework 2021 to 2030

This Framework includes the following 3 components to enable progress on the mitigation of emissions:

1. The EU Emissions Trading System;
2. The Effort Sharing Regulation; and
3. The Land-use, Land-use Change and Forestry Regulation.

Each component covers specific activities which give rise to greenhouse gas emissions and removals. These three pieces of climate legislation are to be updated with a view to implementing the net greenhouse gas emissions reduction target set out in the 'EU Green deal'.

EU Adaptation Strategy 2021

The new strategy sets out how the European Union can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050. The Strategy has the following 4 principal objectives:

1. To make adaptation smarter,
2. Faster adaptation,
3. More systematic adaptation, and
4. To step up international action on adaptation to climate change.

2.3.3 National Context

Climate Action Plan 2023

The Climate Action Plan 2023 (DECC, 2022) is the second annual update to Ireland's Climate Action Plan (2019). It builds on the previous climate action plans and is the first plan to implement economy-wide carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings agreed in July 2022. The updated Climate Action Plan focuses on how to achieve the required system change across society and the economy. The plan requires, by 2030, a 75% reduction in electricity sector emissions, 45% reduction in commercial/public buildings emissions, a 40% reduction in residential buildings emissions, 50% reduction in transport sector emissions, 35% reduction in industry emissions and 25% reduction in agricultural emissions. The plan requires a large-scale deployment of renewables and includes an acceleration of the delivery of onshore wind

to 9GW, solar energy to 8GW and offshore wind to at least 5GW. In addition, the plan outlines support for at least 500MW of local community-based renewable energy projects and increased levels of micro-generation and small-scale generation.

It will put Ireland on a more sustainable path; cut emissions; create a cleaner, greener economy and society; and protect us from the devastating consequences of climate change. It is a huge opportunity to create new jobs and grow businesses in areas like offshore wind; cutting-edge agriculture; and retrofitting, making our homes warmer and safer.

National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (2014)

This established the fundamental national objective of achieving a transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050. This was given legislative effect by the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2015 which provided for the development of a National Adaptation Framework and required each local authority to adopt local adaptation strategies.

Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030

The Irish Governments Energy White Paper sets out a strategic vision to guide the direction of Irish energy policy until 2030 and to transform Ireland into a low carbon society and economy by 2050. This vision envisages a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the energy generation sector by 80-95% relative to 1990 levels by 2050. The White Paper also identifies the long-term strategic importance of diversifying Ireland's energy portfolio and largely decarbonising the energy sector by 2050.

National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (2018) (NCCAF)

The National Adaptation Framework, which was published in January 2018 as a requirement of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, set out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of Ireland to the negative effects of climate change and to benefit from positive impacts. It outlines a whole of government and society approach, in which local authorities share the responsibility for climate action and are key drivers of the energy transition and climate adaptation of communities to the impacts of climate change. The Framework led to the requirement for all local authorities to secure the approval by their elected members of their individual Climate Change Adaptation Strategies.

Programme for Government – 'Our Shared Future' (2020)

The Programme for Government 2020 states that climate change is the single greatest threat facing humanity and the Programme will react comprehensively and imaginatively to achieve a rapid reduction in and then reversal of our impact on the climate (e.g., reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7% annually (on average) to 2030 and the full decarbonisation of the economy by 2050 at the latest). In relation to new transport infrastructure, the government is committed to a 2:1 ratio of expenditure between new public transport infrastructure and new roads over its lifetime.

Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act (2021)

This Act establishes a legally binding framework with targets and commitments set in law, and ensures the necessary structures and processes are embedded on a statutory basis to ensure we achieve our national, EU and international climate goals and obligations in the near and long term future.



Project Ireland 2040 – National Planning Framework

The National Strategic Outcomes set out in the National Planning Framework (i.e. NSO1 Compact Growth, NSO4 Sustainable Mobility, NSO8 Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society, and NSO9 Waste and other Environmental Resources ensure that climate change is enshrined in spatial planning so as to address our national per capita carbon intensity which is higher than average and to achieve a transition to a competitive, low carbon, climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy and society by 2050. In addition, National Strategic Outcome NSO54 is to ‘reduce our carbon footprint by integrating climate action into the planning system in support of national targets for climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, as well as targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions’. To facilitate the achievement of Ireland’s climate and energy targets, a government fund of at least €500 million to support such projects (up to 2027) is included in the National Development Plan.

Climate Action Charter for Local Authorities (2019)

Clare County Council is a signatory to the Climate Action Charter for Local Authorities, signed in 2019 which sets out a common understanding in relation to climate change, acknowledgement of the need for a whole of government approach to address climate change, and acknowledges specific local government supports of central government in

relation to climate change. The Charter sets out a list of 24 commitments that underlines the leadership role of local authorities in delivering effective climate action. The Charter requires local authorities to put in place a process for carbon-proofing major decisions, programmes and projects, including investments in transport and energy, as well as in procurement.

2.3.4 Regional Context

Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

The RSES outlines the challenges of climate change in the Southern Region for agriculture, the marine environment, biodiversity, coastal zones (including coastal erosion) sea level rise, flooding, critical infrastructure, water management, human health, and wellbeing. Regional Policy Objectives are included in the RSES with regard to a low carbon energy future and energy efficiency, climate resilience, resource management, flood risk management, green infrastructure and biodiversity amongst others and climate action is at the heart of the Strategy. In addition, climate change actions are listed as a strategic investment priority for the RSES.

Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) – Atlantic Seaboard South

There are 4 CARO's in Ireland and these were established in 2018 in response to Action 8 of the National Adaptation Framework. The Atlantic Seaboard South CARO co-ordinates climate action at regional and local authority levels. In recognition of the significant obligation to develop and implement climate action measures, the four regional offices are mandated to assist engagement across the varying levels of government and help build on experience and expertise that exists in the area of climate change and climate action.



The composition of the four Climate Action Regions has been determined by the geographical and topographical characteristics, vulnerabilities and shared climate risks across local authority areas. The Atlantic Seaboard South Region consists of the administrative areas of Clare County Council, Cork City Council, Cork County Council, Kerry County Council and Limerick City & County Council.

2.3.5 County Clare

Clare County Council Climate Commitments

The statutory and planning context as previously outlined in this Chapter sets out the climate action parameters and requirements which Clare County Council must adhere to, and the Council is committed to the implementation of these actions.

Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024

The Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 outlines the strategy of the Council to adapt to the effects of climate change and to safeguard the biophysical infrastructure and wellbeing of the people and communities of County Clare. The short, medium and long term objectives of this Strategy have informed the County Development Plan and are incorporated in the development objectives throughout the plan.

Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029

The overall vision and objectives of the plan have been influenced by climate action and Table 2.1 below demonstrates how climate action provisions are integrated as a cross cutting theme throughout the plan. The table lists the objectives in each chapter which relate to climate action.

Table 2.1: Climate Action Objectives

	County Development Plan Chapters	Development Objectives
1	Introduction & Vision	Table 1- Strategic Development Plan Principle
2	Climate Action	CDP 2.1- 2.23
3	Core Strategy	CDP 3.1
4	Urban & Rural Settlement Strategy	CDP 4.1-4.8, 4.12
5	Housing	CDP 5.1-5.6, 5.16
6	Economic Development	CDP 6.1, 6.3, 6.8, 6.10, 6.12, 6.13, 6.15, 6.17, 6.18, 6.19, 6.20, 6.21, 6.22, 6.23
7	Retail	CDP 7.2-7.12
8	Rural Development & Natural Resources	CDP 8.1- 8.13
9	Tourism	CDP 9.1- 9.10, 9.12, 9.13,9.17, 9.20, 9.26
10	Sustainable Communities	CDP 10.1-10.16, CDP17, CDP19, CDP20
11	Transport, Service Infrastructure & Energy	CDP11.2-11.10, CDP11.5, CDP 11.18, CDP11.23, CDP11.26, CDP11.27, CDP11.30, CDP11.31, CDP 11.35, CDP 11.36, CDP11.38, CDP 11.40, CDP11.41, CDP11.43, CDP11.44. CDP11.46, CDP11.54
12	Shannon Estuary	CDP12.1, CDP12.4, -CDP12.10, CDP12.13- CDP12.16.
13	Marine & Coastal Zone Management	CDP13.1 –CDP13.8, CDP13.10-CDP13.4
14	Landscape	
15	Biodiversity, Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure	CDP15.1- CDP15.4, CDP15.5- CDP15.30

16	Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage	CDP16.7, CDP16.13
17	Towns & Villages	CDP17.1- CDP17.3, CDP17.5-CDP17.11.
18	Design & Placemaking	CDP18.1- CDP18.6
19	Land Use & Zoning	CDP19.1 CDP19.2
20	Implementation and Monitoring	Implementation and Monitoring Table

2.4 Climate Change

To guide, support and facilitate County Clare’s transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county it is necessary to implement a wide array of measures during the plan period. Having regard to the county’s significant available renewable resources, Clare County Council will seek to take a lead role in respect of renewable energy technology to assist in meeting national, regional and county targets in energy consumption and CO₂ reduction.

Table 2.2 Renewable Energy Resource Targets for County Clare to 2030

Chapter	Renewable Energy Resource Accessible – Planned	County Clare	
		GWh/y	MW
Thermal			
8	Forest wood fuel & Wood Process by-product	128.3	29.3
8	Energy Crop (Short Rotation Coppice-Miscanthus)	175.0	39.9
12	Geothermal	34.0	15.0
10	Micro-Thermal	175.7	92.8
Sub Total		513.0	177.0
AD-CHP thermal			
8, 14	Anaerobic Digestion - Grass Silage	20.1	2.5
8, 14	Anaerobic Digestion - Animal wastes	15.8	2.0
14	Municipal Organic MSW	25.1	3.2
10	Micro Combined Heat and Power	2.0	0.5
8, 12	Biomass Combined Heat and Power	460.0	58.3
Sub Total		523.0	66.6
Electric			
6	Onshore wind	1,590.0	550.0
9	Offshore wind		
7	Solar	2,260	300
11	Hydro	468.0	89.0
9	Wave	59.1	20.4
9	Tidal	66.1	20.0
10	Micro Generation – Electric	7.2	2.1
8, 10	Combined Heat and Power electric	261.5	29.2

Sub Total		4,711.9	921.7
13	Transport	14.0	2.0
Overall Total Renewable Target		5,761.9	1,167.3

In addition to supporting advances in renewable energy generation, technologies and enterprises and the promotion of energy efficiency, the Council will also support a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions through actions such as:

- The promotion of climate change awareness and behavioural change;
- The integration of climate change issues to the decision-making process;
- The protection and enhancement of biodiversity;
- The implementation of the 10-minute town concept;
- The integration of transport planning and land use;
- The facilitation of remote working;
- Climate adaptation measures including the Wetlands Project within the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Plan for Ennis.

Development Plan Objective: Climate Action	
CDP2.1	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the implementation of the National Climate Action Plan 2023 and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework (and any subsequent versions thereof), and to work with the Regional Climate Action Offices to enable County Clare to transition to a low carbon and climate resilient county;</p> <p>b) To adopt sustainable planning strategies through integrating land use and transportation and by facilitating mixed use developments as a means of supporting national targets of climate policy mitigation and adaptation objectives, and reducing our carbon footprint and greenhouse gas emissions; and</p> <p>c) To raise awareness and understanding of the impacts of climate change on both the local economy and communities in the county, and the ways communities can increase their response and grow their resilience to these impacts.</p>

2.5 Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience

Climate mitigation refers to actions that will reduce current and future greenhouse gas emissions, including reductions in energy use, switching to renewable energy sources and development and maintenance of carbon sinks. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in 2014, defined climate adaptation as:

‘The process of adjustment to actual or expected climate and its effects. In human systems, adaptation seeks to moderate or avoid harm or exploit beneficial opportunities. In some natural systems, human intervention may facilitate adjustment to expected climate and its effects.’

Adaptation refers to the adjustment or preparation of natural or human systems to a new or changing environment. The aim is to moderate harm and to exploit any potential beneficial opportunities. Climate change adaptation seeks to reduce vulnerability to the negative impacts of climate change. Climate change adaptation comprises all spontaneous responses and planned actions taken to cope with the impacts of changing climate conditions. Climate change adaptation works to anticipate possible future changes and to provide a cost-effective means of reducing risk and damage associated with current and predicted climate variability.

Resilience to climate change is the capability to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from significant multi-hazard threats with minimum damage to social well-being, the economy, and the environment. Building resilience requires not only recognising potential hazards like extreme weather events, but also understanding the underlying vulnerabilities that may affect recovery from them. Many adaptation measures that have taken place to date have been reactive, taken directly in response to extreme weather events that have occurred. While considerable uncertainties remain in relation to future climate conditions and the rate of climate change, the underlying trends are evident and projected to continue. By planning and anticipating climatic impacts, it is possible to reduce costs and maximise the effectiveness of adaptation actions. It is therefore necessary to put in place the policy framework for adaptation planning to respond to these challenges.

Development Plan Objective: Climate Change Mitigation, Adaptation and Resilience	
CDP2.2	<p>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 (and any subsequent versions); b) To promote measures that build resilience to climate change to address impact reduction, adaptive capacity, awareness raising, providing for nature-based solutions and emergency planning; c) To raise awareness of issues relating to climate change and climate change adaptation during the lifetime of this plan; d) To liaise, collaborate and work in partnership with the relevant government approved sectors in relation to initiatives and activities across the county; e) To support the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy and its aspiration for Ennis to become Irelands first climate adaptive town; and

	f) To facilitate and support the relevant stakeholders and enterprises in the progression of advancements in climate adaptation solutions and renewable energy generation and technologies.
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2.6 Climate Adaptation Strategy

Climate change mitigation and adaptation is a cross cutting theme throughout this Development Plan and has been incorporated into the related development objectives to ensure that it is integral to future decision making in the county. In conjunction with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO), Clare County Council is committed to achieving the goals and actions as set out in the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 which relate to the following themes:

- Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations;
- Infrastructure and Built Environment;
- Land use and Development;
- Drainage and Flood Management;
- Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure;
- Community Health and Wellbeing; and
- Economic Resilience.

2.6.1 Local Adaptation Governance and Business Operations

The Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024 requires climate adaptation issues to be incorporated into all activities and operations of the Council and that the appropriate actions to address these issues are formulated and implemented. Examples of such actions include the establishment of an Adaptation Steering Group to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Strategy, the preparation of a Council Business Continuity Plan for extreme weather events and collaborating and working in partnership with the sectors identified in the National Adaptation Framework on the delivery of the sectoral adaptation actions.

Development Plan Objective: Severe Weather Emergency Response Plans	
CDP2.3	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the implementation of the Flood Emergency Plan for the county with specific flood response plans for identified areas and of a Business Continuity Plan which identifies, and addresses impacts associated with extreme weather events on all functions/services of the Local Authority.

2.6.2 Infrastructure and the Built Environment

The Strategy requires that the Council ensures the resilience to climate change of infrastructural assets and that all future investment decisions and development proposals are informed by climate change issues. This is to be achieved through the identification, quantification, and resolution of climate related risks so as to protect key assets from service disruption.

Land-use and transportation are intrinsically linked in planning for our town and village centres and the Council is committed to enabling more sustainable travel options in the county through actions such as the preparation of an integrated transport strategy that takes account of 'Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future – A New Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020' and 'A New Vision for Sustainable Mobility – A Review of Ireland's Public Transport and Active Travel Policy' (2019)'.

The Smarter Travel document is currently under review and any new sustainable transport targets that may emerge will be translated to the Clare context. The Council in partnership with the National Transport Authority is also committed to the preparation and implementation of a Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan for Ennis and its environs, the implementation of an Active Travel Towns programme and of the ten-minute town concept arising from the Ennis 2040 Strategy, all of which support green infrastructure, active living and sustainable residential development.

The Development Plan includes objectives to support land use policy, future development proposals and transportation strategies that ensure the viability of bus and rail services in the county. To assist in ensuring the viability of these services, the Council will support and facilitate the improvement and expansion of rail Infrastructure and the improvement of community-based transport schemes. The Development Plan also includes designated infrastructure safeguards to consolidate and facilitate the further expansion of these services.

2.6.3 Land Use and Development

In accordance with the Strategy which requires the integration of planning, land-use and transportation considerations in decision making the Development Plan has identified the optimum location for future developments in this regard and is also working with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, the National Transport Authority and Limerick City and County Council to prepare the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.

2.6.4 Drainage and Flood Management

The preparation of the Development Plan has been informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment which identifies areas that are at risk of flooding so as to ensure that inappropriate development does not take place within these areas (i.e., through land use zoning). The Council also maintains a Flood Emergency Plan which includes specific flood

response plans for identified areas. The identification of areas at risk of flooding and flood risk issues will also inform future decisions regarding infrastructure requirements such as coastal defence systems, flood alleviation schemes and storm water management infrastructure. Future developments are required to provide separate foul and surface water drainage. nature based systems and onsite attenuation systems and are encouraged to utilise green infrastructure solutions for sustainable surface water drainage systems where feasible.

2.6.5 Natural Resources and Cultural Infrastructure

It is an objective of the Council to protect the natural and cultural heritage assets of the county from the impacts of climate change and to undertake a risk assessment of these assets so as to inform the measures required to build their resilience. In accordance with the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy the Development Plan also includes objectives regarding the preparation and implementation of a tree planting programme in the county, the inclusion of natural buffer zones (where appropriate) along existing/proposed trails and amenity areas, effective bio-diversity management, the harnessing of renewable energy sources (see Volume 5), the achievement of a low carbon county, the management and protection of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark, the appropriate management of water resources and the expansion of the cultural infrastructure of the county.

2.6.6 Community Health and Wellbeing

A key requirement of community health and wellbeing is the building of capacity and resilience to the impacts of climate change within communities and this is reflected in the plan objectives. This is achievable through raising awareness of climate change issues within communities, assessing the risks for vulnerable communities, and the preparation and implementation of programmes to respond to these risks.

2.7 Climate Action Strategy

2.7.1 Biodiversity

Biodiversity is affected by the impacts of climate change, and it also contributes to climate change mitigation and adaptation measures through the role of ecosystems in the carbon cycle. It is an objective of the Council to ensure that all risks to biodiversity, habitats and natural resources from climate change impacts are identified and measures are employed to appropriately address these issues. The Council will also seek to protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the county both within protected areas and in the landscape through the protection of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats, the enhancement of new and existing habitats, and through the integration of Green Infrastructure (GI) and ecosystem services including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species into the plan.

2.7.2 Core Strategy

The Core Strategy of the Development Plan as set out in Chapter 3 outlines the parameters for the settlement strategy in Clare in terms of the consolidation and planned growth of existing settlements and the sustainable development of rural areas and communities. The Core Strategy also facilitates the further reduction of greenhouse gas emissions through compact growth and the acceleration of the shift to sustainable mobility. The chapters and objectives of the Development Plan outline the methods through which the targets as set out in the Core Strategy will be achieved, to facilitate the continued evolution of County Clare towards an inclusive, competitive, low carbon and climate resilient county.

Development Plan Objective: Smart Growth Initiatives	
CDP2.4	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support smart growth initiatives that develop new solutions to existing and future urban challenges, including climate risks in the-county and to seek climate and smart technology funding in this regard.

2.7.3 Decarbonisation Zone

A decarbonisation zone is a spatial area identified by the local authority in which a range of climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures and action owners are identified to address local low carbon energy, greenhouse gas emissions and climate needs in order to contribute to national climate action targets. The Council will work with the Climate Action Regional Offices to implement and monitor the actions in the forthcoming Regional Decarbonisation Plan across all sectors and is committed to researching and mapping area(s) considered beneficial for use as local carbon offsets through carbon sequestration in line with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage Circular LGSM01-2021.

Development Plan Objective: Decarbonisation Zone	
CDP2.5	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support and facilitate the sustainable development of a decarbonisation zone in County Clare in accordance with the Climate Action Plan 2023; and b) To prepare an implementation plan for the decarbonisation zone.

2.7.4 Design and Placemaking

In conjunction with the compact growth of our towns and villages the Development Plan includes objectives to support town centre renewal, to successfully redevelop designated opportunity sites, to address vacancy issues, to remove barriers to revitalisation and achieve positive growth, to require both public and private developments to make a positive

contribution to the public realm, to enhance civic spaces and streetscapes, to adhere to the principles of universal access and permeability, to implement the '10-minute' town concept and to ensure active travel and integration of public transport and land use.

2.7.5 Economic Development

The Economic Development Chapter and associated objectives outline the requirement for all future developments to assist in the transition of County Clare to a competitive, low carbon and circular economy whilst also addressing issues such as shifting demographics and technological change.

2.7.6 Energy Generation and Use

Through the Renewable Energy Strategy, the Wind Energy Strategy, and the related objectives of the Development Plan the Council will support and facilitate renewable energy use and sustainable generation at appropriate locations within both the county and its offshore waters to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050.

2.7.7 Residential Development

To address the issues of climate change in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, and Circular Letter NRUP 02/2021 'Residential Densities in Towns and Villages, as set out in Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas', the delivery of compact residential growth and appropriate densities is critical to transition to a lower carbon society and the tackling of climate change. In addition to the application of tiered residential densities and the compact growth requirements as determined by the National Planning Frameworks and Circular Letter NRUP 02/2021 the plan also includes objectives with regard to design and placemaking and the Council will seek funding through sources such as the Rural and Urban Regeneration and Development Funds in this regard.

2.7.8 Resource Management

Chapter 8 of the Development Plan 'Rural Development and Natural Resources' sets out the objectives of the Council to facilitate, encourage and appropriately manage the development of the natural resources of the county and to ensure that this is done in a sensitive way, eliminating any significant adverse effects on the natural and built environment and in compliance with all relevant legislation and planning requirements (including climate action requirements).

With regard to water management, the impacts of climate change may have considerable impacts on the reliable availability of water sources arising from lower water levels during extended dry periods. In addition, an increase in the regularity and severity of flood events would increase the pressure on existing water services infrastructure. Chapter 11 'Physical Infrastructure, Environment and Energy' sets out how future water services infrastructure

proposals must ensure resilience to the impacts of climate change. Also, it requires that where nature-based solutions are feasible, these options should be fully explored and progressed where appropriate.

2.7.9 Settlement Strategy

The Settlement Strategy for the urban and rural areas of the county is set out in Chapter 4 of the Development Plan. The settlement hierarchy, the settlement statements, land use plans and rural housing requirements of the plan support the compact growth of our towns and villages, the appropriate development of serviced lands, the consolidation and enhancement of the vibrancy of communities and places across the county and improved connectivity between where people live and work (i.e. alteration of commuter patterns to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions).

2.7.10 Transport

The transport sector is the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Ireland (i.e. behind agriculture) and in 2019 greenhouse gas emissions from transport accounted for 20.3% of the total national emissions. In addition, increases in transport emissions have been recorded in 5 out of the last 7 years. This Development Plan facilitates and supports climate change mitigation measures such as the electrification of mobility systems, the promotion of a modal shift to active travel and use of public transport, the integration of land use planning and public transport, and effective land use management to address the issues currently arising from the transport sector.

2.8 Flood Risk Management

The impact of climate change in County Clare is visible through increased rainfall days per year, more intense rainfall events, sea level rises, increased river flows and surface water flooding. Management of flood-related issues is therefore of critical importance to the future sustainable development of the county.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) introduced flood risk assessment into the planning process. This was subsequently augmented by 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management (and Technical Appendices) – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG/OPW 2009) and by Circular PL2/2014 (2014). The aim of the Guidelines is to enable the future sustainable development of areas by ensuring that development proposals are considered and assessed against the risk of flooding. This will avoid development taking place in areas identified as being at risk of flooding, with the consequent potential damage to property and the economy. The Council has had regard to these Guidelines in the preparation of the Development Plan and also considers them when assessing proposals for future development, including redevelopment, or the extension or intensification of existing uses.

The Development Plan contains settlement statements and plans for all towns and villages in the county (excluding Shannon town, which has its own local area plan), with a consequent

requirement to prepare a Flood Risk Assessment appropriate to each settlement and zoning. In order to fulfil all requirements of 'The Planning System and Flood Risk Management - Guidelines for Planning Authorities', the zonings and objectives in this Development Plan were informed by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is included as Volume 10 of this Development Plan.

The Council has sought to proactively manage flood risk in the county in accordance with DoEHLG Planning Guidelines, by strategically mapping the extent of predicted flooding in County Clare by defining flood risk in the county by zonal classification. Flood risk is generally accepted to be a combination of the likelihood of flooding and the potential consequences arising, which are shown as Flood Zones. These classifications indicate a high (A), moderate (B) or low (C) risk of flooding.

The flood designations shown on maps in Volume 2 are used to indicate the likelihood of a flood event occurring. The zones indicate a high, moderate or low risk of flooding from fluvial or tidal sources. They assume that no flood defences are in place and are also based on the best currently available technology and information and may be subject to future amendment. As well as providing one of the criteria for the allocation of land use zoning within the Development Plan, it is intended that these maps would be used as a screening tool to alert the Council to potential risk to future development proposals.

The OPW's first cycle of Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Plans drew to a close in 2016, culminating in a Flood Risk Management Plan (FRMP) for each River Basin District (RBD), with Clare spanning the Shannon and Western RBD's. Detailed flood risk and hazard mapping for a number of towns within Clare was also produced, along with a Preliminary Options Report which outlined where investment in flood management measures would be beneficial. Work on the implementation of the FRMP's and design of a number of Flood Relief Schemes is now underway or planned for the coming number of years. Flood Relief Schemes progressed ahead of the CFRAM Study, such as Ennis South, are also nearing completion. In County Clare the following areas were identified as Areas for Further Assessment under the CFRAM and were subject to detailed flood risk analysis:

- Bunratty
- Killaloe
- Quin
- Sixmilebridge
- Ennis
- Kilrush
- Shannon
- Springfield
- Kilkee
- O'Briensbridge and Montpelier
- Shannon Airport

For issues relating to Coastal Flooding, please see Chapter 13 Marine and Coastal Zone Management.

Development Plan Objective: Flood Risk Assessment and Management	
CDP2.6	It is an objective of Clare County Council:

	<p>a) To ensure development proposals have regard to the requirements of the SFRA and Flood Risk Management Guidelines; and where required are supported by an appropriately detailed hydrological assessment / flood risk assessment.</p> <p>b) To ensure that flood risk assessments include consideration of potential impacts of flooding arising from climate change including sea level rise and coastal erosion;</p> <p>c) To integrate sustainable water management solutions, prioritising nature based solutions (such as SUDS, nonporous surfacing and green roofs) into development proposals;</p> <p>d) To include Natural Water Retention Measures (NWRMS) where appropriate in consultation with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and other relevant stakeholders:</p> <p>e) To support investment in the sustainable development of capital works under the Flood Capital Investment Programme and Flood Risk Management Plans developed under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) process; and</p> <p>f) To ensure that potential future flood information obtained/generated through the Development Management process is used to inform suitable adaptation requirements in line with the Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Flood Risk Management (DoECLG & OPW, 2009).</p>
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Development Plan Objective: Coastal Erosion and Flooding	
CDP2.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council to:</p> <p>a) To support measures (including Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)) for the management and protection of coastal resources and communities against sea level rise, coastal erosion, flooding and other threats and the implementation of adaptation responses in vulnerable areas; and</p> <p>b) To monitor the impact of climate change on the potential shock flows of surface water on to Clare’s beaches during severe weather events, and how increased surface water flows will impact on bathing water quality and erosion of the beach infrastructure.</p>

Development Plan Objective: Floods Directive and CFRAMS	
CDP2.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the implementation of the EU Floods Directive 2007/60/EC to manage flood risks; and b) To implement the recommendations of the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Study (CFRAMS) programme as it relates to County Clare and to ensure that flood risk management policies and infrastructure are progressively implemented.

Development Plan Objective: Effective Collaboration to Implement River Basin Management Plans and the Water Framework Directive	
CDP2.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure a cross-agency collaborative approach to implementing the River Basin Management Plan; b) To ensure effective co-ordination between the requirements of the Flood Directive and the Water Framework Directive; c) To promote a catchment-based approach to water management to facilitate cross boundary collaboration and shared responsibility; d) To support bottom-up community initiatives through the integrated catchment management approach; e) To support the work of the Local Authority Waters Programme in promoting an integrated approach to catchment management.

Development Plan Objective: Flood Relief Schemes	
CDP2.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support investment in subsequent projects by capital spending agencies to deliver flood relief schemes under the National Strategic Outcome, Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society. Such projects should be future proofed for adaptation to consider potential impacts of climate change; and b) To require that all infrastructure and energy providers/operators provide for adaptation measures to protect strategic infrastructure (including roads, railways,

	ports and energy infrastructure) from increased flood risk associated with climate change.
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2.8.1 Storm Water Management

Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) are effective technologies which aim to reduce flood risk, improve water quality and enhance biodiversity and amenity. They mimic the natural drainage of a site to ensure that the development does not increase the risk of flooding or pollution of rivers/watercourses. No additional surface water will be allowed to discharge to foul sewers or combined sewers in such an approach. Surface water drainage systems for new developments will be designed in accordance with the principles of attenuation and controlled discharges, SuDS and with any storm water policy documents which may be produced by the Council. The full suite of SuDS measures should be considered, as appropriate, in any drainage scheme.

Development Plan Objective: Storm Water Management	
CDP2.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that adequate storm water infrastructure is in place to accommodate the planned level of growth in the Plan area; b) To require all new developments to provide a separate foul and surface water drainage system; c) To ensure the implementation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) and in particular, to ensure that all storm water generated in a new development is disposed of on-site or is attenuated and treated prior to discharge to an approved storm water system; and d) To request the submission of details regarding Surface Water Attenuation Systems that take account of the potential future impact of climate change for multi-unit development applications in the plan area. Development will only be permitted in areas where sufficient surface water capacity exists.

2.8.2 Green Infrastructure and Flood Management

There are increasing moves towards working with more natural processes and use of green infrastructure rather than using traditional ‘grey infrastructure’ such as embankments and dykes to manage flood events. Green infrastructure uses nature’s own capacity to absorb excess waters and can play a major role in sustainable flood risk management. By reducing stormwater runoff and protecting floodplains, green infrastructure can help manage both localised and riverine floods. In areas impacted by localised flooding, green infrastructure practices absorb rainfall, preventing water from overwhelming pipe networks and pooling in streets or basements.

Green infrastructure practices that enhance infiltration include rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavements. In areas impacted by riverine flooding, green infrastructure, open space preservation, and floodplain management can all complement grey infrastructure approaches. These practices reduce the volume of stormwater that flows into streams and rivers, protecting the natural function of floodplains, and reducing the damage to infrastructure and property.

Development Plan Objective: Flood Risk Management, Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity	
CDP2.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To facilitate and implement green infrastructure developments as a means of managing flood risk and enhancing the natural environment in the plan area in compliance with Objective CDP 3.1; and b) To avail of opportunities to enhance biodiversity and amenity and to ensure the protection of environmentally sensitive sites and habitats where flood risk management measures are planned subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

2.8.3 Maintenance of Rivers and Waterways

Blockage of rivers and waterways, particularly in urban areas, has the potential to obstruct the natural drainage regime in an area. Addressing these issues is a key element of flood risk management in the towns and villages of County Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Maintenance of Rivers	
CDP2.13	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To encourage and facilitate the maintenance of rivers and waterways by statutory authorities and the cleaning of drains in urban areas where appropriate, subject to the requirements of Objective CDP3.1, the OPW Best Practice Guidelines and the Wildlife Act.

2.9 Energy Decarbonisation, Efficiency and Conservation

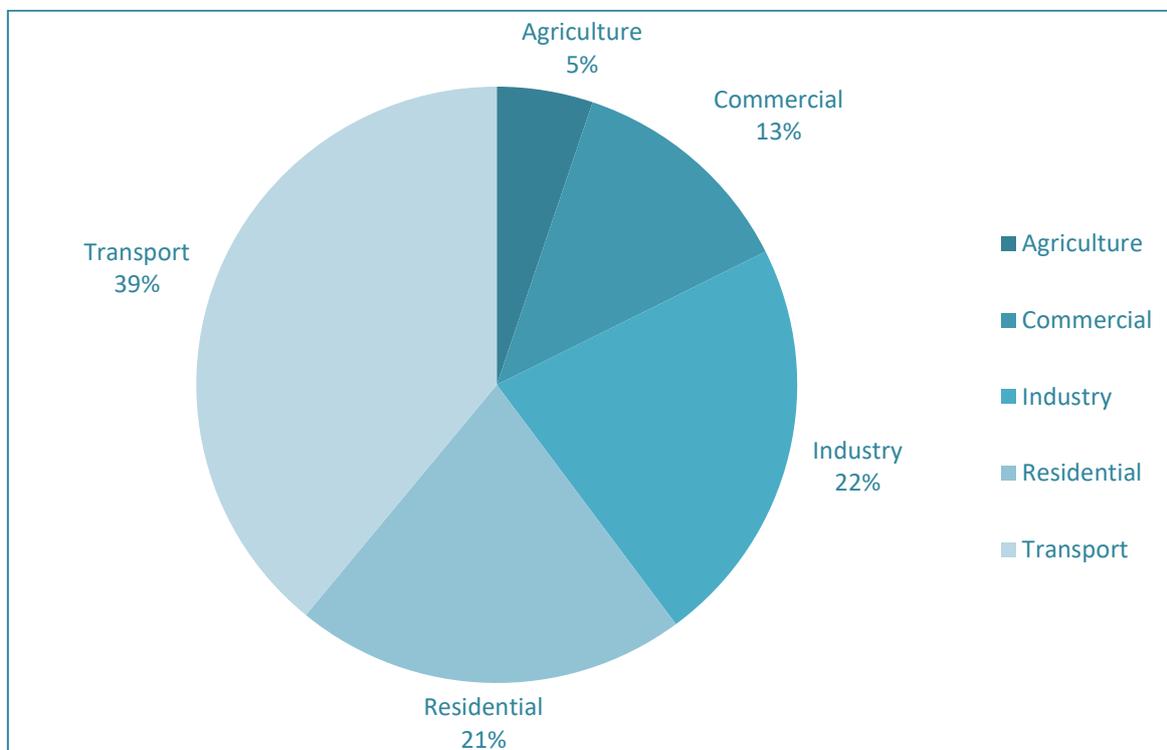
Across the world, the response to climate change has focussed efforts on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the energy sector. There are two key elements in achieving this target. Firstly, an economy must have access to substantial quantities of renewable resources. County Clare is well positioned to become self-sufficient in renewable energy, as set out in the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) 2023-2030. Secondly, there must be a significant increase in energy efficiency and conservation.

The creation of a low carbon economy is essential to ensure that County Clare remains an attractive place in which to live and do business. Low carbon centres for commerce will enable the county to attract high value businesses that are actively seeking a location where sustainable low carbon energy security can be guaranteed. New, ambitious renewable energy and emission reduction targets are being set at EU and National level. The RES sets a path for Clare to the year 2030, and revises the original RES in relation to policy, targets and new technology options.

The RES is included in Volume 5 of this plan whilst the Clare Wind Energy Strategy (WES) is included in Volume 6. These outline the renewable energy resources of the county and seek to position County Clare as a national leader in renewable energy generation. The RES also supports energy efficiency and conservation and the achievement of balanced social and economic development to deliver on Ireland’s Climate Action Plan.

The RES outlines the strategy for renewable energy developments including solar energy, bio-energy, marine renewables, hydroelectric power and renewable heat. The RES also outlines the strategy with regard to issues such as micro generation, micro hydroelectric power, renewable transport, energy storage and community energy. The development plan objectives relating to the implementation of the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy (as set out in Volume of this plan) and the Clare Wind Energy Strategy are set out in Sections 11.8.5 to 11.8.7 of Chapter 11 of this plan.

Figure 2.1 County Clare Total Energy Consumption by Sector 2020



2.9.1 Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society

Clare County Council recognises the importance of resource efficiency and waste minimisation. In order for County Clare to establish a low carbon society and economy it is important that all businesses are supported in establishing energy efficient systems, technologies and practices.

The Council will facilitate measures to accelerate this transition including supporting the development of enterprises that create and employ green technologies and the implementation of the provisions of Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 as they relate to County Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Transition to a Low Carbon Economy and Society	
CDP2.14	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate measures which will accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy and a circular economy through mechanisms such as the Climate Action Competitive Fund; b) To support the development of enterprises that create and employ green technologies and to promote County Clare as a low carbon county as a means of attracting inward investment to the county and to the wider Southern Region; c) To support the Ennis 2040 Strategic Objective to establish Ennis as Ireland’s first climate adaptive town; d) To support and facilitate the implementation of the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024; e) To ensure that the development of green industry and technologies incorporates careful consideration of potential environmental impacts at project level including the capacity of the receiving environment and existing infrastructure to serve these new industries. f) To facilitate the development of energy sources which will achieve low carbon output. g) To support sustainable modes of transport such as walking and cycling through promotional strategies and the provision of active travel infrastructure where required; h) To work to implement the provisions of Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 as they relate to County Clare; i) To require the submission of an Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statements for large scale commercial and residential applications;

	<p>j) To promote climate change issues across business, public and residential sectors and to target measures and support initiatives to achieve reduced greenhouse gas emissions in accordance with current and future national targets, improve energy efficiency and increase the use of renewable energy sources across the key sectors of electricity supply, heating, transport and agriculture;</p> <p>k) To support investments in the energy efficiency of existing commercial and public building stock with a target of all public buildings and at least one-third of total commercial premises upgraded to BER Rating 'B'; and</p> <p>l) To report annually on energy usage in all public buildings and to achieve a target of 33% improvement in energy efficiency in all buildings in accordance with the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan (NEEAP).</p>
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2.9.2 Energy Efficiency and Conservation

Energy efficiency, which is typically improved through technological advancements, involves using less energy to perform the same task. Although less energy is consumed, the same standard of product or service is achieved, thus it is the energy waste that is reduced. Ireland has a target of 32.5% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030 and a more ambitious target of 33% in the public sector alone.

Energy conservation is behaviour that results in the use of less energy. Conservation is usually reliant on changes in human behaviour and increased awareness or smart monitoring and control technology. All citizens are energy citizens, interacting with the energy system as consumers, employees, transport users, householders and landowners. Every person has a role to play in the energy transition. Consumer choices in the home, in the community, at work and when travelling are an important aspect of an energy citizen's role and responsibility. Energy citizens can play an active role in the transition to a low carbon energy future. There are measures that can be taken to conserve energy whilst maintaining a satisfactory standard of living. For example, installing timers or smart heating controls, turning the temperature down by 1°C, switching off lights, appliances, and devices when not in use and maximising natural daylight. Once implemented, these measures can provide financial savings on the next energy bill, while also contributing to Clare's and Ireland's targets. The Council will support and encourage the implementation of programmes to enhance energy efficiency and conservation including the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) 'Better Energy Homes Programme' and the 'Better Energy Communities Programme'. In addition, the Council will facilitate and support the capture and conversion of 'waste' energy sources and the conversion of such energy to a usable resource for local consumption. Objective CDP11.52 'Energy Efficiency and Conservation' as set out in Chapter 11 outlines the support of Clare County Council for the National Energy Efficiency Action Plans and the implementation of the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy (Volume 5 of this plan) county-level strategies to reduce energy demand in the county.

2.9.3 Renewable Transport

It is estimated that 39% of total energy consumption in County Clare in 2020 related to transport and this sector is accountable for the greatest increase in emissions in Clare since 1990 (with a 143% increase to 2005). By adopting a range of energy efficiency and conservation measures outlined in the National Energy Efficiency Action Plan and policy in ‘Smarter Travel – A Sustainable Transport Future: A new Transport Policy for Ireland 2009-2020’, County Clare endeavoured to reduce energy associated with the transport sector by 129 GWh from 2010 to 2020. Clare exceeded this target and made reductions of 179 GWh. County Clare aimed for reductions of CO₂ emission by 32,900 tonnes and made reductions of 42,750 tonnes over the same period.

The National Climate Action Plan commits to a target of 936,000 electric vehicles on Irish roads by 2030 and the ban on sales of fossil-fuel cars is planned from 2030 onwards. Clare County Council acknowledges that ensuring there is the necessary infrastructure in place to support this change is crucial to the success of the required transition.

Development Plan Objective: Renewable Transport	
CDP2.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To seek initiatives that will achieve the decarbonisation of the transport sector, moving to the use of clean generated electricity bio-gas hydrogen and other non-fossil fuels for private and public transportation and the provision of clean energy and low carbon fuelling stations by 2030; b) To reduce reliance on private cars and achieve modal shift to sustainable transportation in conjunction with policies to achieve compact growth and reduce congestion; c) To seek the development of clean energy and lower carbon fuelling and electric vehicle charging stations and infrastructure at appropriate locations in the county which take into consideration electric, hydrogen, CNG/biogas inter-alia; and d) To support actions to transition the movement of freight, ports and airports to a low carbon future.

In addition to the above objective CDP11.10 (a) ‘EV and CNG Infrastructure and Smart Mobility’ supports investment in the sustainable development of electric vehicle charging facilities aligned with the county’s transportation networks whilst CDP11.10(c) requires the inclusion of electric vehicle charging point infrastructure within residential, commercial and mixed-use developments in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines.

2.9.4 Community Energy

Community energy is a broad term to describe citizen and local ownership and participation in renewable energy generation, distribution and efficiency. Interest in this form of energy generation is growing as more people become energy aware, motivated to respond to climate change, and seek to engage more with sustainability. Community renewable energy projects present the opportunity to create a regular income stream which can be used to fund local improvements to enhance and strengthen communities. They can generate wider benefits such as investment in local communities, local job creation and raising local awareness and interest in other types of renewable energy. The objectives relating to the development of renewable energy generation in the county are set out in Chapter 11 of this plan (CDP11.47 and CDP11.48).

Development Plan Objective: Community Energy	
CDP2.16	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support and encourage the development of community owned energy initiatives at appropriate locations across the county; b) To support communities seeking designation as ‘Sustainable Energy Communities’; and c) To explore the potential of designating Shannon Town Centre as a ‘Sustainable Energy Community’ during the lifetime of the plan.

2.9.5 Renewable Heat

Clare County Council considers that there is the opportunity to develop a number of combined heat and power (CHP) plants and associated district heating in the county and particularly in areas of high heat demand. In the Shannon Municipal District, Shannon Town has been the subject of a detailed energy needs study and energy modelling which has identified an existing energy use breakdown of 57% thermal and 43% electric (industrial, commercial and residential sectors) which is a good match for combined heat and power. The creation of efficient district heating systems would facilitate the development of the indigenous biomass industry, maximise and encourage agricultural diversification and reduce the CO₂ emissions associated with heating buildings.

Development Plan Objective: Renewable Heat	
CDP2.17	It is an objective of Clare County Council : To support and encourage the development of District Heating, in compliance with the objectives set out in Chapter 14, as a means of facilitating:

	<p>a) The increased use of heat generated from indigenous, low carbon, renewable resources (e.g. bio-energy, solar and geothermal);</p> <p>b) The utilisation and distribution of useful waste heat from large thermal processes; and</p> <p>c) The utilisation and distribution of useful heat from a combined heat and power (CHP) plant, where such a plant’s primary energy is met by indigenous, low carbon, renewable resources (e.g. bio energy, solar and geothermal).</p>
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2.9.6 Solar Energy

Solar energy technology harnesses the energy radiated from the sun that reaches the earth as visible light. This light can be categorised as direct and indirect depending on cloud cover and location. Solar energy can be used to produce electricity, heat, or hot water. There are two main categories of technologies that are suitable for installation in Ireland, solar thermal and solar photovoltaic (PV). The National Climate Action Plan target to meet 80% renewable electricity generation in Ireland by 2030 includes a target of up to 8 GW of solar energy. The following solar energy guidance documents have been published by SEAI. More information in relation to solar energy can be found in Chapter 10.

- Planning and Development Guidance Recommendations for Utility Scale Solar PV Schemes in Ireland;
- SEAI Best Practice Guide Photovoltaic’s (PV) (SEAI); and
- SEAI Domestic Solar Photovoltaic Code of Practice for Installers (2021).

Development Plan Objective: Solar Energy	
CDP2.18	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate and support the development of solar farms in appropriate locations throughout the county including on agricultural lands and brownfield sites subject to normal planning considerations; and</p> <p>b) To encourage the use of solar thermal or solar PV installations as part of the design and planning process for new developments and refurbishments.</p>

2.9.7 Bio-Energy

Bio-energy is energy derived from biological sources, typically organic matter from plants and animals and their by-products. It can be categorised as biomass, biogas, and biofuels. Biomass refers to land and aquatic vegetation, organic waste, and photosynthetic organisms. Biogas, formed from biomass, can be combusted in boilers to produce heat, or in combined heat and power plants, typically gas engines, to provide both heat and electricity.

Development Plan Objective: Bio-Energy	
CDP2.19	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate and support the development of bio-energy opportunities, facilities, and associated enterprises throughout the county including on brownfield sites subject to normal planning considerations.

2.9.8 Micro-Generation

Micro-generation of electricity may be from a variety of sources including wind, solar, CHP, and heat pumps and the Council will facilitate and support such developments subject to normal considerations. There are also a number of exemptions from the requirement to obtain planning permission for micro-generation apparatus included in the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

Development Plan Objective: Micro-Generation	
CDP2.20	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate and support the development of micro-renewable energy installations and technologies at appropriate locations throughout the county and to encourage the use of micro-renewable technologies throughout the county for all redevelopment / extension / expansion projects subject to normal planning considerations.

2.9.9 Micro Hydroelectric Generation

County Clare has the potential to accommodate micro hydroelectric schemes and where a suitable resource exists, with access to the grid and / or a corresponding local electricity demand, a micro hydroelectric generation site can contribute to a reduction in carbon use as a renewable energy source.

Development Plan Objective: Micro Hydroelectric Generation	
CDP2.21	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate the development of micro hydro power developments on a case by case basis, where proposals comply with requirements of the Habitats Directive, Birds Directive, the relevant River Basin District Management Plan, 'Guidelines on the Planning, Design, Construction and Operation of small scale hydroelectric schemes and Fisheries' DCENR and Inland Fisheries Ireland and other

	related legislation/ guidance that is available , in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development.
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2.9.10 Ardnacrusha Hydroelectric Power Station

The ‘Shannon Scheme’ at Ardnacrusha was the first electricity generating station operated by the ESB. It was developed by the Irish government between 1925 and 1929. The construction of this ground-breaking scheme played a pivotal role in the development of Ireland in the 20th Century and beyond. It also generated huge employment throughout the period, paving the way for the social, economic, and industrial development of Ireland. At the time, the 86 MW capacity was enough to meet the electricity needs of the whole country. Today, Ardnacrusha represents around 2% of our installed capacity and supplies electricity to more than 46,000 homes.

Development Plan Objective: Ardnacrusha Hydroelectric Power Station	
CDP2.22	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the utilisation of all of the existing infrastructure at Ardnacrusha Hydroelectric Power Station, to increase its power input to the National Energy Grid.

Chapter 3 Core Strategy

Goal II: A county that drives local and regional sustainable growth by harnessing the potential of its unique location, quality of life, natural resources and other competitive advantages.

Chapter 3 Table of Contents

3.0	Introduction
3.1	Core Strategy
3.2	Strategic Aims
3.3	Relevant Plans, Policies and Strategies
3.3.1	The National Planning Framework (NPF)
3.3.2	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)
3.3.3	Other Plans and Strategies taken into Consideration
3.3.4	Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007
3.3.5	Settlement Plans and Local Area Plans
3.3.6	Adjoining Local Authorities’ Development Plans
3.4	Settlement Hierarchy
3.4.1	Compliance with National and Regional Population Targets
3.4.2	Core Strategy Statement
3.4.3	Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy
3.4.4	Retail Planning
3.4.5	Housing Strategy
3.4.6	Climate Action
3.4.7	Economic Strategy
3.4.8	Core Strategy and relevant Environmental Assessments
3.4.9	Core Strategy Map
3.5	Conclusion

3.0 Introduction

This chapter sets out the Core Strategy of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. The Core Strategy illustrates how the vision for the county will be achieved in a manner that is consistent with the guidance, strategies and policies at national and regional level, in particular, the National Planning Framework (NPF) and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES). The purpose of the Core Strategy is to set out an evidence-based strategy for the future development of the county.

3.1 Core Strategy

The preparation of a core strategy as part of the development plan establishes a transparent evidence-based strategy for the sustainable spatial development of the county. It sets out the quantum, location and phasing of development for the plan period in accordance with the population target and housing supply target, in the form of a settlement hierarchy, the Core Strategy Table and the Core Strategy Map.

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires the inclusion of an evidence-based core strategy in development plans which demonstrate how the development plan is consistent with the National Planning Framework and the relevant regional spatial and economic strategy. The core strategy must take account of any policy of the Minister in relation to national and regional population targets and serves to reinforce the role of the development plan as the fundamental link between national, regional and local policies. The core strategy must also provide the policy framework for other documents within the organisation including the local economic and community plan, local areas plans and the zoning of land in settlements.

The core strategy of a development plan must:

- Set out the area of land already zoned, or proposed to be zoned, for residential use, or a mix of residential and other uses, and indicate the number of housing units to be provided in that area;
- Where appropriate, indicate if the lands are to be developed on a phased basis;
- Show that the planning authority has had regard to relevant guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Act in setting the objectives relating to retail development; and,
- Set out a settlement hierarchy for the development area which provides details of:
 - That part of County Clare within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the Key Town of Ennis as set out in the NPF and the RSES;
 - Other towns referred to in the hierarchy;
 - Policies or objectives in relation to national or regional population targets that apply to the towns and cities referred to in the hierarchy;
 - Policies or objectives in relation to national or regional population targets that apply to areas or classes of areas not included in the hierarchy;
 - Projected population growth in the settlements in the hierarchy;

- The national primary, national secondary, regional and local roads;
- Inter-urban and commuter rail routes; and
- Rural areas to which the Sustainable Rural Housing – Guidelines for Planning Authorities apply.

The Core Strategy of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 contains:

- (1) A Core Strategy section of the written statement, outlining the origins and broad aims of the strategy, including in particular the population and housing targets or allocations for the plan period;
- (2) A diagrammatic Core Strategy Map, depicting how the Planning Authority anticipates its area will develop over the plan period and in line with the availability of infrastructure, services and amenities, and,
- (3) A Core Strategy Table, summarising the key statistics in the Core Strategy regarding the distribution of future population and housing and its ability to deliver on the objectives of the RSES.

3.2 Strategic Aims

The strategic aims of the Core Strategy are:

- To demonstrate how the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is consistent with national and regional planning strategies, guidelines and policies including national and regional population targets and housing demand projections;
- To strengthen the role of the development plan as the fundamental link with national, regional, county and local policies;
- To provide the policy framework for settlement plans and local area plans (LAPs), particularly in relation to land-use zoning, and to ensure a strategic approach to zoning that allows an appropriate level of development throughout the plan area.
- To set the context for the key infrastructure of the county and its role;
- To provide a framework within which the provision of sustainable infrastructure, amenities, economic investment and development can take place to maximise the use of resources in the county, for current and future generations; and,
- To comply with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

3.3 Relevant Plans, Policies and Strategies

The following sets out a brief summary of the main provisions of the National Planning Framework and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. It also sets out the plans and strategies at national, regional and local level that have been taken into consideration in the preparation of this development plan.

3.3.1 The National Planning Framework (NPF)

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, on behalf of the Government, has prepared and published the National Planning Framework under Project Ireland 2040.

This is the overarching policy and planning framework for the social, economic and cultural development of our country. It is a national document that will guide the strategic planning and development for the country over the next 20 years at a high-level, so that as the population grows and that growth is sustainable (in economic, social and environmental terms).

The National Planning Framework coupled with the National Development Plan for Project Ireland 2040, which sets the context for each of Ireland's three Regional Assemblies to develop their regional spatial and economic strategies. From these, local authorities form their county development plans in a manner that will ensure national, regional and local plans align.

The vision set out under this National Planning Framework is based on a set of values that will ensure long term economic, environmental and social progress for all parts of our country. In framing a new way forward, the National Planning Framework draws upon lessons learned from the National Spatial Strategy and highlights a vision of success based on better choices compared to a 'business as usual' approach.

3.3.2 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES)

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) provides a long-term, strategic development framework for the future physical, economic and social development of the Southern Region and includes Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) to guide the future development of the region's three main cities and metropolitan areas – Cork, Limerick-Shannon and Waterford.

The RSES primarily aims to support the delivery of the programme for change set out in Project Ireland 2040 - the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan 2018-2027 (NDP). As the regional tier of the national planning process, it will ensure coordination between the city and county development plans and local enterprise and community plans (LECP) of the ten local authorities in the region.

The RSES recognises the strategic role played by all areas, urban and rural, in achieving the set regional and national targets and objectives. Support for sustainable growth of all communities, urban and rural, are supported by the RSES. A strategy is pursued that builds on cities and metropolitan areas as engines of growth and seeks in parallel to reposition the region's strong network of towns, villages and diverse rural areas in an economically resilient, imaginative and smart manner to create a sustainable competitive advantage for the region.

Figure 3.1 RSES Strategy Map



3.3.3 Other Plans and Strategies taken into Consideration

In addition to the strategic guidance set out in the NPF and the RSES a large number of national, regional and local level plans and strategies, including significant documents such as the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Transport Strategy, and the Mid-West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP) were taken into consideration in the preparation of this development plan. Regard has also been had to planning guidance documents issued in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended. A full list can be found in Appendix 7.

3.3.4 Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007

Regard has also been had to ‘Development Plans – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2007’. These guidelines aim to assist and promote consistent best practice among all planning authorities in the preparation of development plans. They also aim to improve the quality and consistency of plans, strengthen their strategic content, and improve consensus building in their preparation, implementation and review. The development plan was also prepared having cognisance to the Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2022.

3.3.5 Settlement Plans and Local Area Plans

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, introduced a tiered and plan-led system, setting out a framework to give a more detailed and localised effect to the policies and objectives of the county development plan. As indicated in Chapter 1, the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 will govern the overall land-use objectives for County Clare. Volume 3 of this development plan contains settlement plans for all of the settlements in the county with the exception of Shannon. Within the life of this plan an 'Ennis and Environs' and a new 'Shannon Town and Environs' local area plan will be prepared.

3.3.6 Adjoining Local Authorities' Development Plans

Pursuant to the requirements of Section 9(4) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, in making the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, regard was had to the development plans of the adjoining planning authorities of Galway County Council, Tipperary County Council, Limerick City and County Council and Kerry County Council.

3.4 Settlement Hierarchy

The Settlement Hierarchy of this plan has been developed to take account of the role of each of the identified settlements in accordance and alignment with the identified settlement hierarchy in the RSES. A settlement hierarchy is a spatial expression of sustainable population distribution, settlement order or level and settlement role. It provides a strategic direction to the appropriate management of growth, investment and resources in accordance with the Core Strategy in a climate resilient manner. With the identification of projected population growth for County Clare within the lifetime of this plan and the identification of the relevant tiers of the settlement hierarchy, housing land has been allocated to deliver new homes to meet a growing population in a sustainable manner.

The distribution of future population and household growth in this plan is based on the key principles of the NPF and the RSES in delivering more compact growth, improving the alignment of population and employment growth, sustainable mobility and climate action. The range of locations in County Clare from the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, the Key Town of Ennis, the Metropolitan Town of Shannon, the Service Towns of Kilrush/Cappa, Scarriff/Tuamgraney and Ennistymon/Lahinch, to the Smaller Towns, Rural Villages, and Countryside are set out in the Settlement Hierarchy which is illustrated in Map 3A and set out in Table 3.1 below. The settlement hierarchy is based not only on population, but on a variety of strategic long-term planning and land use considerations including the capacity of individual areas to accommodate growth; jobs to resident workers ratio; availability of road, rail and air transport; availability of water and wastewater services; availability of education facilities; and the requirement to revitalise rural areas. In addition, the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process have informed the preparation of the Settlement Hierarchy.

Table 3.1 Settlement Hierarchy in County Clare

<p>Key Town Ennis</p>
<p>Metropolitan Area (Key component of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan) Shannon Sixmilebridge (Small Town) Athlunkard, Bunratty, Clonlara, Parteen, Ballycannon North (Meelick) (Large Villages) Ardnacrusha, Cratloe, O'Briensbridge (Small Villages)</p>
<p>Service Towns Ennistymon/Lahinch, Kilrush/Cappa, Scarriff/Tuamgraney</p>
<p>Small Towns Kilkee, Killaloe, Lisdoonvarna, Miltown Malbay, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Tulla</p>
<p>Large Villages Tier 1 Ballyvaughan, Clarecastle, Corofin, Crusheen, Doonbeg, Feakle, Inagh, Kilkishen, Mountshannon, Mullagh, Quilty, Quin, Whitegate, Liscannor, Kilfenora and Killimer Tier 2 Killadysert, Kilmihil</p>
<p>Small Villages Barefield, Bridgetown, Broadford, Carrigaholt, Cooraclare, Doora, Doolin, Kilmaley, Kilmurry, Labasheeda, Lissycasey, Ballinruan, Ballyea, Ballynacally, Bellharbour, Bodyke, Boston, Caher, Carron, Clooney, Connolly, Cranny, Creegh, Cross, Doonaha, Fanore, Flagmount, Inch, Kilbaha, Kilbane, Killanena, Kilmurry McMahon, Kilnaboy, Kilnamona, Kilshanny, Knock, Knockerra, Moy, Moyasta, O'Callaghans Mills, Ogonelloe, Querrin, Ruan, Spanish Point, Toonagh, Tubber</p>
<p>Clusters Ardkyle, Ballaghboy No.1, Ballaghboy No.2, Ballinooskey/Lisconner, Ballintlea South, Ballintlea South 2, Ballycar, Ballycorick, Ballyduff, Ballyea South, Ballyfaudeen, Ballyhannon North, Ballyhannon South No.1, Ballyhannon South No.2, Ballygireen, Ballymacahill, Ballymorris, Ballynagun West, Ballyveskil/Tiermaclane, Ballyvonnavaun/Deerpark, Ballyvrislaun, Barntick, Barloughra, Bartra, Bealaha, Bearnafunshin/Ballyogan, Beevrack, Behagh, Buncraggy, Caherea, Caherush, Cappa Sixmilebridge, Carrowmeer, Castlecrine, Castlequarter, Castlequarter Kilkeedy, Cloonadrum, Cloonanaha, Cloonoughter, Coogyulla Cross, Coolisteige, Cratloekeel, Crosses of Annagh, Deerpark/Corlack, Doonass, Drumandoora, Drumdrehid, Drumeen, Drumline 1, Drumline 2, Drummina, Drumquin, Finvarra, Garraun, Garraunboy, Gilloge, Kildorus, Killeenan, Killow/Knockanimana, Kilmaley Lower, Kilmore, Kineilty, Knockfin, Knockloskeraun, Leamaneigh More, Lisduff, Lisheen, Luogh South, Manusmore, Maurices Mills, Meelick, Monaskeha, Mooghaun North, Mortyclough, Mountrivers Cluster, Murrooghkilly, Murroughtoohey South, New Quay, Newtown Clonlara, Portdrine, Poulawillin, Rockforest/Aughrim, Roo East, Sooreeny, South of Rossmanager Bridge, Spancil Hill, Streamstown, The Wells, Tromra, Urlan More/Bellsfort, Williamstown, Woodpark</p>
<p>Countryside The countryside are those parts of County Clare outside of recognised settlements</p>

3.4.1 Compliance with National and Regional Population Targets

Project Ireland 2040 - Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework provides transitional population projections at a county scale in order to inform the

development plans for the period 2026 to 2031. The transitional population for County Clare and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is listed in the table below.

Table 3.2 Transitional Local Authority Population Projections To 2031

	2016	2026	Uplift 2016 to 2026	2031	Uplift 2016 to 2031
County Clare	119,000	129,500- 131,500	10,500- 12,500	134,000- 137,000	15,000- 18,000

Source: NPF Implementation Roadmap – July 2018 – DoEHLG

Table 3.2 specifies the target population projections for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA) to 2026 and 2031. The RSES has targeted the Metropolitan Area to grow by 26,716 to 2026 and by a further 13,052 to 2031. For that part of County Clare within the LSMA this translates to a 3,553 increase to 2026 with an additional 1,592 increase to 2031, being a total of 5,145 increase from 2016 to 2031.

Table 3.3 Projected Populations 2026 and 2031 for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

Area	Population 2016	Projected Population 2026	Projected Population 2031
Limerick City and Suburbs (in Limerick)	89,671	111,192	121,953
Limerick City and Suburbs (in Clare)	4,521	5,607	6,150
Subtotal	94,192	116,799	128,103
Remainder Metropolitan Area (in Limerick)	15,281	16,924	17,622
Remainder Metropolitan Area (in Clare)	22,947	25,414	26,463
Subtotal	38,228	42,337	44,085
Total Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area	132,420	159,136	172,188

Source: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region

This plan adopts an approach to population growth that is linked to the implementation of the NPF, the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (DHPLG, July 2018) and the RSES. In addition to the parameters set in the foregoing strategies, the methodology set out in the Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DHLGH, December 2020) has been employed as part of the development of the Core Strategy.

The guidelines highlight the need to ensure that a comprehensive and coordinated approach is taken to estimating what the scale and nature of future needs will be. The guidelines set out a consistently applicable methodology (using an enhanced evidence base of detailed housing demand projection scenarios modelled by the Economic and Social Research Institute

(ESRI)), that enables NPF population targets to be broadly translated into household demand projections and integrated housing supply targets at both national and local levels.

The projected NPF population distribution forms the basis of the NPF 50:50 housing demand projection scenarios modelled by ESRI, and this remains the preferred national development scenario to 2040. Appendix 1 of the guidelines provides projected housing demand for each local authority area for the period 2020-2031 based on the NPF Scenario. The Core Strategy has been prepared in accordance with the population projections outlined in the Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework (2018) as well as the housing demand projections identified by the ESRI, subject to the methodology set out in Section 4.0 of the Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning, Guidelines for Planning Authorities issued under Section 28 of the Act and adjusted for the period of the plan.

The projected housing demand for County Clare and the distribution of future population in the county is outlined in Table 3.4 Core Strategy Table. Appendix 8 contains further detailed methodology calculations based on the requirements of the Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2020).

3.4.2 Core Strategy Statement

The Core Strategy has taken the following into account:

- Compliance with the NPF and RSES;
- The settlement hierarchy for the county as detailed in Table 3.1, which prioritises population and economic growth to the Key Town of Ennis, the LSMA, Service Towns and Small Towns and promotes their continued growth;
- Accommodating local growth at a scale appropriate to the settlement size and function in the Service Towns, Small Towns and Large Villages;
- Facilitating residential development in serviced and unserved settlements as an alternative to rural one-off housing;
- Management of urban generated growth in rural areas under strong urban influence, by ensuring single houses in the open countryside are based on the core consideration of demonstrable economic or social need to live in the rural area in addition to compliance with statutory guidelines, plans and having regard to ensuring the viability of villages and towns;
- Ensuring all lands identified for development are in accordance with the 'Tiered Approach to Land Use Zoning' as set out in the NPF and identified in Appendix 1 of the Volume 3 Settlement Plans;
- Climate change and sustainability; and
- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Guidance Note on Core Strategies (2010) and in particular Section 4 in so far as it relates to an excess associated with Strategic Development Zones.

The Core Strategy has also been prepared and informed by the Housing Strategy and the Housing Need and Demand Assessment (HNDA). In addition, the following local context has informed the approach:-

- The allocation of population growth to the settlements on a sustainable tiered approach based on the settlement hierarchy, the infrastructure services, demand, past delivery, jobs to resident workers ratio and potential growth. This means that settlements will grow at an appropriate rate and at a more self-sufficient level, thereby reducing the need to commute;
- The consolidation of settlements and the distribution of many land use types within settlement boundaries including a mix of uses in the centre of settlements will facilitate reduced travel demand and also increase usage of sustainable modes of transport;
- The density approach is reflective of the higher order settlements i.e. LSMA, Key Towns, Service Towns, Small Towns and Villages and the existing built environment;
- Application of a graduated and responsive, tailored approach to the quantum of zoned lands having regard to Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (Cities, Towns & Villages) (DEHLG, May 2009) and Circular Letter NRUP 02/2021. Therefore, in addition to higher densities in settlements, consideration has been given to an element of lower density development which does not represent more than 20% of the total planned housing stock in any settlement;
- The quantum, location and distribution of new development has had regard to the capacity of existing and planned wastewater services infrastructure;
- The capacity of settlements to grow in the absence of necessary infrastructure, i.e. the Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) and geographical constraints such as the River Shannon, the Ardnacrusha Headrace, Parteen Bridge and flood zones in the Limerick suburbs;
- Ennis 2040 An Economic and Spatial Strategy; and,
- Environmental considerations have been taken into account in the preparation of the Core Strategy.

The focus of the Core Strategy is on developing and strengthening the role of the Key Town of Ennis, the Metropolitan Town of Shannon, the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, the Service Towns, Small Towns and villages and the sustainable development of our rural areas. The focus is on achieving compact growth of our urban settlements thereby decreasing the distance that people must travel from their home to work and highlighting the importance of integrating land use and transportation planning. The plan seeks to develop the Town Centre First approach and the concept of a 10 minute town, which will make our towns and neighbourhoods better places to live, work and visit, improving the alignment of population and employment growth, sustainable mobility and climate action. Chapter 4 sets out in detail the Urban and Rural Spatial Strategy for the future development of the county.

While the purpose of the Core Strategy is to identify locations across the county where future development is likely to take place it is not intended that an overly rigid approach to development would be employed by consenting authorities. The growth projections are to be

viewed as targets rather than caps or limitations to growth within those individual settlements. Where there is scope within settlements and appropriately zoned land available, planning decisions which may include growth over and above the stated target as set out in the Core Strategy will be considered.

Additional Provision

The Core Strategy includes 'Additional Provision' as per Section 4.4.3 of the Development Plan Guidelines, 2022. This approach recognises that a degree of choice in development sites to be provided locally is desirable to avoid restricting the supply of new housing through inactivity on a particular landholding or site. Therefore, the use of the additional provision mechanism increases the probability of achieving the housing supply targets in the first instance.

The Development Plan Guidelines do not restrict the settlement tiers to which additional provision can be applied, stating "The extent of any Additional Provision must be identified, quantified and explained in the Core Strategy and should not exceed 20-25% of the required quantum of zoned land and sites in settlements in any planning authority area as a whole, for any six-year plan period;"

Additional Provision has been applied across the county and the exact locations are identified in the Core Strategy Table. It is primarily used in Ennis and the Metropolitan Area and in areas where housing demand is highest and where adequate services are available to support it. It has also been used in some smaller scale settlements where the quantum of land zoned is small and the additional provision increases the probability of achieving the housing supply targets should this limited supply of land be too restrictive.

Unmet Need

The population target for the county arising from the NPF is 7,231 people with a housing supply target of 4,500 provided by the Housing Supply Target Methodology. In addition, the Core Strategy provides for an additional 2,000 persons/1,260 units distributed across the county to meet the housing unmet needs of the additional population arising from the humanitarian response to persons arriving in Ireland fleeing the conflict in Ukraine, which is not represented in the NPF population projections. This is justified for the following reasons:

1. Data shows 3,500 displaced people from Ukraine currently residing in County Clare, as of November 2022. This is anticipated to continue to increase in the near term. This population is not accounted for in the NPF Implementation Roadmap population projections. The majority are currently accommodated in hotels and therefore there is a need to provide housing units to cater for their needs in the short to medium term.
2. The preliminary 2022 Census results show an additional population of 1,000 in 2022 in County Clare over and above the NPF Implementation Roadmap population projection. This figure includes for only a portion of those additional displaced people

from Ukraine (to April 2022) that are resident in County Clare, but also incorporates a higher natural growth level.

Based on the above factors the Core Strategy provides for a total population of 9,231 and 5,730 housing units.

Proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ)

The application for the proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) is currently under consideration by the Minister. The Core Strategy Table identifies a population allocation for the proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) which is yet to be designated but has the potential to be in place to some extent during the lifetime of this plan. Its population allocation for the plan period is 197. The full extent of the potential population of the proposed SDZ is 3,500 which is above and beyond the scope of the population allocation in the current cycle and is seen as a medium to long term project of regional and national importance. In this regard the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Guidance Note on Core Strategies, Section 4 provides scope for such excess, allowing development plan core strategies to consider later phases of development in SDZs as part of a strategic land bank. Hence it is important that the full proposed SDZ population of 3,500 is identified at this point in time.

Extant Permissions

In limited circumstances, where there are outstanding planning permissions for dwelling units, such development or commitments may result in a small number of settlements appearing to be over zoned. This is applicable in Ennis, Clonlara, Bunratty, Crusheen, and Tulla. In these cases, any apparent over zoning is relative to dwellings yet to be completed prior to this plan coming into effect which has been accounted for in the calculation of the 6 year HST figure. It is deemed important that the plan allows for the quantum of completions provided for prior to the plan coming into effect.

Phasing

It is not considered appropriate to impose phasing on the development of lands which are located within or contiguous to the existing built-up area of settlements. The imposition of further phasing could lead to uncertainty in the market which may impact the delivery of development at suitable locations identified for growth.

Compact Growth

In accordance with the National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth, the National Planning Framework requires 50% of all new housing in the Limerick City suburbs (in County Clare) to be within the existing built-up footprint of the suburbs, through the development of brownfield and infill sites and revitalisation. Across the rest of the county, 30% of all new

homes are to be provided within the existing built-up footprint of settlements and this is reflected in the Core Strategy Table. The compact growth portion is to be achieved in Mixed Use lands within and contiguous to town centres. The remaining housing is to be achieved on residentially zoned sites.

Strategic Residential Reserve

Strategic Residential Reserve lands have been identified across serviced settlements to facilitate longer term growth needs across the county. These lands comprise infill or contiguous sites or in some cases there is an on-site planning history of residential use. These lands are considered as the most appropriate sites for the long-term sequential expansion of the relevant settlement. These Strategic Residential Reserve lands, in general, will not be brought forward for development within this plan period, however non-residential development may be considered if it is appropriate to the site context. Consideration may also be given to development of some Strategic Residential Reserve lands for housing before the end of the plan period.

In its assessment of proposals for residential development on Strategic Residential Reserve lands, the Planning Authority must be satisfied that the development of Residential zoned land is progressing faster than expected and a shortage of available lands may arise, or that Residential zoned land is not being brought forward as expected and a shortage may arise, which would hinder the delivery of residential units to meet demand during the plan period. The assessment will also be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy, and that the development permitted will not prejudice the future use of the remaining Strategic Residential Reserve lands for the longer-term growth needs of the plan area.

The residential development of such lands will only be considered from the beginning of year four of the plan (April 2027) to give an opportunity for zoned land to be brought forward for development. It will also be a requirement that the Strategic Residential Reserve lands can be serviced and can offer a reasonable substitute in terms of being delivered within the lifetime of the plan, that they are sequential lands within the settlement with good connectivity and access to services and amenities.

Development Plan Objective: Core Strategy	
CDP 3.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the delivery of the Core Strategy in accordance with the Table 3.4 Core Strategy Table and the Map 3A Core Strategy.

Development Plan Objective: Supply of Zoned Land	
CDP 3.2	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that sufficient land continues to be available to satisfy the housing requirement of the County over the lifetime of the plan.

Table 3.4 – Core Strategy Table

Settlement Typology	Settlement	2016 Population	Population Target 2029	2023-2029 Population Target	Housing Units Target	Compact Growth / Infill / Brownfield (Units)	Residential Units to be Delivered on Green Field Sites	Density	Green Field Land Required for Residential Development (ha)	Additional Provision (ha)	Green Field Land Required for Residential Development +Additional	Unmet Population	Unmet Units by Location	Land Requirement for unmet Demand (ha)	2023-2029 Population Target + Unmet Population	Housing Units Target + Unmet Demand	Compact Growth/Infill/ Brownfield (Units) for Unmet Demand	Residential Units to be Delivered on Green Field Sites for Unmet	Land Requirement for Population Target + Additional	Zoning as per Map (ha)	
Key Town	Ennis	25,276	29,629	2,480	1,550	465	1085	35/15	47.12	11.78	58.90	976	610	18.54	3456	2160	648	1512	77.44	91.05	
Totals		25,276	29,629	2,480	1550	465	1085		47.12	11.78	58.90	976	610.00	18.54	3456	2160	648.00	1512.00	77.44	91.05	
Metropolitan Area	Skennans	9,899	10,947	883	552	166	386	35/15	16.78	5.45	22.23	146	91	2.77	1029	643	193	450	25.00		
	SDZ		197	197	123	37	86								197	123					
	Sixmilecross	2,669	3,169	298	186	56	139	35/15	5.65	1.26	6.91	42	26	0.79	340	212	64	148	7.70	8.05	
	Athlunkard	3,486	3,95	179	112	112	35	3.87	0.5	3.57	48	30	0.82	227	142		142	4.39	4.92		
	Bunratty	375	424	66	41	12	29	30/15	1.32	0.35	1.73	66	41		66	41		62	3.99	4.50	
	Clonsilla	684	766	118	74	22	52	30/15	2.49	1	3.49	24	15	0.50	142	89	27	62	3.99	4.50	
	Portlaoine	834	880	42	26	26	30/15	1.25	0.29	1.54	48	30	1.44	99	56		56	2.98	3.41		
	Ballycanann North (mealick)	917	847	42	26	8	18	30/20	0.80	0.7	1.50				42	26			1.50	2.88	
	Unserviced Metropolitan Area including Small Villages and Open Countryside		8,604	11,521	146	74										146	74				
	Totals		27,468	28,646	1,971	1214	301	839		31.42	9.55	40.97	308	192.00	6.32	2279	1406	283.20	858.80	47.30	28.56
Service Town	Ennistymon / Liskick	1,567	1,878	186	116	35	81	25/10	5.07	1.27	6.34	116	73	3.19	302	189	57	132	9.53	11.77	
	Kilrush/Cappa	2,489	2,975	296	185	56	130	25/10	8.08	2	10.08	106	66	2.88	402	251	75	176	12.96	11.90	
	Scarriff / Tuamgraney	805	1,017	94	59	18	41	20/10	2.97	0.59	3.56	86	54	2.72	180	113	34	79	6.29	6.08	
	Totals	4,861	5,870	576	360	108	252		16.12	3.86	19.98	308	193.00	8.79	884	553	165.90	387.10	28.77	29.75	
Small Town	Kilkeel	1,155	1,631	192	64	19	45	20/10	3.23	1.3	4.53	78	49	2.47	180	113	34	79	7.00	8.92	
	Killaloe	1,293	1,669	123	77	23	54	25/10	3.35	0.5	3.84	67	42	1.32	190	119	36	83	5.70	6.08	
	Lisdownerna	800	1,125	70	44	13	31	20/10	2.22	1	3.22	18	11	0.55	88	55	17	39	3.77	6.39	
	Miltown Malbay	769	897	69	43	13	30	20/10	2.17		2.17				69	43			2.17	5.50	
	Newmarket-on-Fergus	1,968	2,255	174	109	33	76	25/10	4.76	0.9	5.66	61	38	1.66	235	147	44	103	7.32	7.92	
	Tulla	759	864	67	42	13	29	25/10	1.83		1.83				67	42			1.83	7.87	
	Totals	6,844	8,441	605	379	114	265		17.57	3.70	21.27	224	140.00	6.52	829	519	130.20	303.80	27.79	43.18	
Large Villages - Tier 1	Ballyvaughan	327	452	24	15		15	15/10	1.32	1	2.32	16	10	0.88	40	25		25	3.20	1.65	
	Clarecastle (Ennis figure)																				
	Carrafin	751	814	53	33		33	20/15	2.11	0.66	2.77	48	30	1.92	101	63		63	4.69	4.64	
	Corrheen	534	647	38	24		24	20/10	1.73	0.43	2.16	38	24		38	24			2.16	4.29	
	Dunbeg	342	376	24	15		15	15/10	1.32		1.32	35	22	1.94	59	37		37	3.26	2.98	
	Feskil	250	316	18	11		11	15/10	0.97		0.97	16	10	0.88	34	21		21	1.85	2.09	
	Inagh	247	337	18	11		11	20/15	0.70	0.3	1.00	18	11		18	11			1.00	1.00	
	Kilbirken	592	681	45	26		26	15/10	2.29	0.3	2.59	45	26		45	26			2.59	2.82	
	Mountrahanna	170	211	13	8		8	15/10	0.70	1	1.70	13	8		13	8			1.70	1.73	
	Mulleigh	146	156	10	6		6	20/15	0.38	0.1	0.48	16	10	0.64	26	16		16	1.12	1.26	
	Quilty	211	248	14	9		9	15/10	0.79		0.79	16	10	0.88	30	19		19	1.67	1.11	
	Quin	984	1,091	70	44		44	20/15	2.82	1	3.82	26	16	1.02	96	60		60	4.84	5.21	
	Whitegate	207	236	14	9		9	15/10	0.79		0.79	10	8	0.88	14	19		19	1.67	1.42	
	Liscannor	182	259	14	9		9	15/10	0.79	0.7	1.49	14	9		14	9			1.49	2.04	
	Kilfenora	290	306	21	13		13	15/10	1.14		1.14	11	7	0.62	32	20		20	1.76	1.47	
	Kilmar	146	174	10	6		6	15/10	0.53	0.5	1.03				10	6			1.03	1.12	
	Totals		5,379	6,304	386	239		239		18.39	5.99	24.38	184	125.00	9.66	570	364		280.00	34.03	34.87
Unserviced: Tier 2 Large Villages & Small Villages (including Broadford & Cuncleare) & Open Countryside		48,989	55,760	1213	758	227	531								1213	758					
	Totals	48,989	55,760	1213	758	227	531								1213	758					
		118,817	134,650	7,231	4,500	1,215	3,211		131	35	166	2,000	1,260	50	9,231	5,760	1,227	3,342	215	227	

SDZ Population of 197 with an additional 3,303 as a long-term population. Total 3,500

3.4.3 Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy

All the policies and objectives of this plan flow from and are consistent with the higher level national and regional policies and strategies. The Core Strategy population targets set out in Table 3.4 above identify the relevant population target, housing supply targets and housing land requirement for each of the settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy. These population targets and land requirements are reflected in the settlement plans set out in Volume 3 of this plan and should be used as a framework for the provision of water and wastewater services in the county.

Strong settlements are the mainstay of a strong county. Vibrant and viable settlements that provide a range of jobs, services and housing choice not only create the basis of strong economies and communities but also support a greater range of sustainable modes of transport, both within and between settlements. The development of a range of settlements that work together to the benefit of the county and all its inhabitants, including those in rural areas, can only occur in a planned way. The main tool for achieving this is a Settlement Strategy based on the Core Strategy which will enable the proper planning and sustainable development of towns, villages and rural areas coupled with an essential transition towards a competitive, low carbon climate resilient and sustainable mobility future.

The Settlement Strategy for County Clare is outlined in full in Chapter 4 of this plan. It gives effect to the NPF and the RSES and will act as a guide to the location and scale of new development. There is a clear link between the Settlement Hierarchy and the role of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the Key Town of Ennis, the population target for the county, housing supply targets and residential land requirements for each settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Additionally, in order to achieve balanced county-wide growth, the Settlement Strategy was prepared having regard to the capacity of individual areas to accommodate growth; jobs to resident workers ratio, availability of road, rail and air transport; availability of water and wastewater services; availability of education facilities; and the requirement to revitalise rural areas. Regard was had to the SEA and AA processes.

Moreover the Settlement Strategy is consistent with the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2020) and RPO 27 of the RSES while responding to the specific rural typology of County Clare. The Rural Settlement Strategy set out in Chapter 4 of this plan identifies two types of rural areas – ‘rural areas under strong urban influence’ and ‘other rural areas’.

These areas were classified based on analysis of each Electoral District against a range of criteria including:

- Commuting flows to the main employment locations of Ennis, and the Limerick-Shannon and Galway Metropolitan areas;
- Population change;
- Population density;

- Environmental and landscape sensitivities; and,
- Development pressure for single rural dwellings over the past 10 years.

The settlement policy for rural housing in both of these categories of area is set out in Chapter 4 Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy.

3.4.4 Retail Planning

The objectives regarding the management of retail development in County Clare are contained in Chapter 7 Retail of this development plan and in Volume 7 Clare Retail Strategy. Clare County Council's designation of settlements in the Settlement Hierarchy and the retail policies of this plan are informed by the defined retail hierarchy and align with estimates of the requirements for future retail floorspace provision as set out in the Clare Retail Strategy. The objectives in Chapter 7 of this plan further translate the retail policies as identified in the Retail Strategy for County Clare.

In accordance with the DECLG Retail Planning Guidelines (2012), this plan:

- a) States the elements of the settlement hierarchy in line with the RSES and the Core Strategy;
- b) Outlines the level and form of retailing activity that is appropriate to the various components of the settlement hierarchy;
- c) Defines, by way of maps, the boundaries of the core shopping areas of town centres and the location of any neighbourhood centres;
- d) Includes a broad assessment of the requirement for additional retail floorspace;
- e) Sets out strategic guidance on the location and scale of retail development to support the settlement hierarchy;
- f) Identifies sites which can accommodate the needs of modern retail formats in a way that maintains the essential character of the shopping area;
- g) Includes objectives to improve accessibility in retail areas, create pedestrian and cyclist-friendly town centres and to improve the retailing experience through public realm interventions; and
- h) Identifies relevant development management criteria for the assessment of retail developments.

3.4.5 Housing Strategy

Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires all planning authorities to include a housing strategy in any development plan. National Policy Objective 27 of the NPF requires each local authority to prepare a 'Housing Need Demand Assessment' (HNDA). A HNDA is defined in the NPF as a database to allow local authorities to run a number of different scenarios to inform key decisions on housing need and supply. A HNDA is designed to give broad, long-term estimates as opposed to precision estimates. Volume 8 of this plan comprises the Housing Strategy and the Housing Need Demand Assessment for County Clare and is given effect in this development plan by objectives contained in Chapter 5 Housing.

3.4.6 Climate Action

Climate Change has an increasing role to play in how the county is planned in the future. The plan has a critical role to play in ensuring the communities develop having regard to sustainable infrastructure networks which build resilience to climate change. The plan seeks to integrate land use and transport planning to influence travel behaviour and to reduce the overall need to travel. This is achieved by promoting a more efficient land use pattern where suitable land uses are located closer together and by promoting high quality urban permeability. The plan further supports energy efficiency and energy security.

3.4.7 Economic Strategy

This plan also sets out policies and objectives in support of the economic development of the county in particular in Chapter 6 Economic Development and Enterprise. The strategy provides for a concentration of new economic and employment development primarily within the main towns to bring balance across the county and improve the level of employment choice, while also ensuring there are lands zoned to provide appropriate scaled employment opportunities in smaller settlements. In addition, Ennis 2040 An Economic and Spatial Strategy is a long-term strategy for the sustainable development of the Key Town of Ennis and addresses the measures required to manage economic, infrastructural, environmental and physical challenges.

Working in partnership with local stakeholders such as the Ennis 2040 DAC, the Clare Economic Taskforce, the Chamber of Commerce and local and semi-state agencies, Clare County Council, through its Economic Development Directorate, its Local Enterprise Office and its Economic Development and Enterprise Strategic Policy Committee, will proactively pursue further economic development opportunities for the county to enhance the conditions that foster enterprise and create and sustain jobs. The Council will proactively foster and develop relationships recognising the county's clear strategic position on the Atlantic Economic Corridor and proximity to Galway City, Limerick City and Shannon International Airport, whilst also building on the connection between towns and the surrounding rural areas within the county.

3.4.8 Core Strategy and relevant Environmental Assessments

This Core Strategy has been informed by the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and the Appropriate Assessment, which were undertaken as parallel processes in tandem with each stage of the development plan preparation. In addition, the implications and requirements of the Floods Directive in relation to flood risk assessment and management and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive as regards protecting and enhancing water quality, particularly with regard to securing the objectives of the River Basin Management Plan, have been incorporated into the plan, thereby ensuring full integration and consideration of environmental issues throughout the plan-making process.

Volume 10 comprises the SEA Environmental Report, Natura Impact Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA). Each of the development plan objectives and settlement plans is in compliance with the outcomes of the SEA, AA, and SFRA processes. The objective to comply with the Water Framework Directive is stated in CDP 11.26 and CDP 11.27, while the objectives contained in Chapter 15 ensure that AA and SEA requirements are incorporated into the implementation of the development plan and settlement plan policy as well as any subsequent local area plans. In addition, objective CDP 15.3 requires, where appropriate, that all plans and projects comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive. Climate change considerations have been integrated throughout the preparation of the plan, in particular, into the SFRA and the objectives contained in the Chapter 2 Climate Action. The reduction of energy demand and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy is an underlying principle throughout the plan and is also dealt with in detail in the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy and Clare Wind Energy Strategy (Volumes 5 and 6 of this plan). In accordance with the provisions of Section 10(1D) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, the development objectives in the development plan are consistent, as far as practicable, with the conservation and protection of the environment.

Development Plan Objective: Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	
CDP 3.3	<p>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To require compliance with the objectives and requirements of the Habitats Directive, specifically Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4), Birds, Water Framework, and all other relevant EU Directives and all relevant transposing national legislation; b) To require project planning to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project development and any necessary assessment to be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to species, where required together with the preparation of both statutory and non-Statutory Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA); c) To protect, manage and enhance ecological connectivity and improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network; d) To require all proposals to ensure there is 'no net loss' of biodiversity within developments; e) To ensure that European sites and Natural Heritage Areas (designated proposed NHAs) are appropriately protected; f) To require the preparation and assessment of all plans and projects to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 10 of this development plan; and

	g) to require compliance with the objectives of the Water Framework Directive and support the implementation of the 3rd Cycle River Basin Management Plan (and any other iteration during the lifetime of the plan).
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3.4.9 Core Strategy Map

Delivery of a plan-led settlement strategy in line with the integration of services, transport, infrastructure, economic activity, development of natural resources, while preserving the natural environment and amenities is a critical component of this development plan’s Core Strategy. The Core Strategy Map (Map 3A) demonstrates how the county works with respect to the main geographical areas, the Settlement Hierarchy and existing transportation, energy and communication, together with its relationship to adjoining regions.

All motorway, national, secondary and primary routes as well as regional roads are shown and named, including the proposed Shannon Bridge Crossing in Killaloe which will provide a direct link between the East Clare area and the M7 motorway network. The Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake’s Corner) is displayed. The route of the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) is also shown. This road, when developed, will give enhanced access to the University of Limerick and help to foster stronger economic connectivity between County Clare, Shannon International Airport and the University of Limerick. In addition the proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) is shown. The objectives in relation to access to National Routes, prepared in line with the Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012 are contained in Chapter 11. The Western Rail Corridor is also highlighted. The Killimer-Tarbert ferry is identified as a critical ferry route and provides a means of waterborne transport in the West of Ireland. Moneypoint and Ardnacrusha and associated power lines are critical elements of the state electricity generation and supply network. Shannon International Airport provides global connectivity into and out of the county and region. The relationship and linkages of all these key elements are shown in the wider context of the smaller settlements in the county, the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, Key Town of Ennis and the wider Atlantic Corridor.

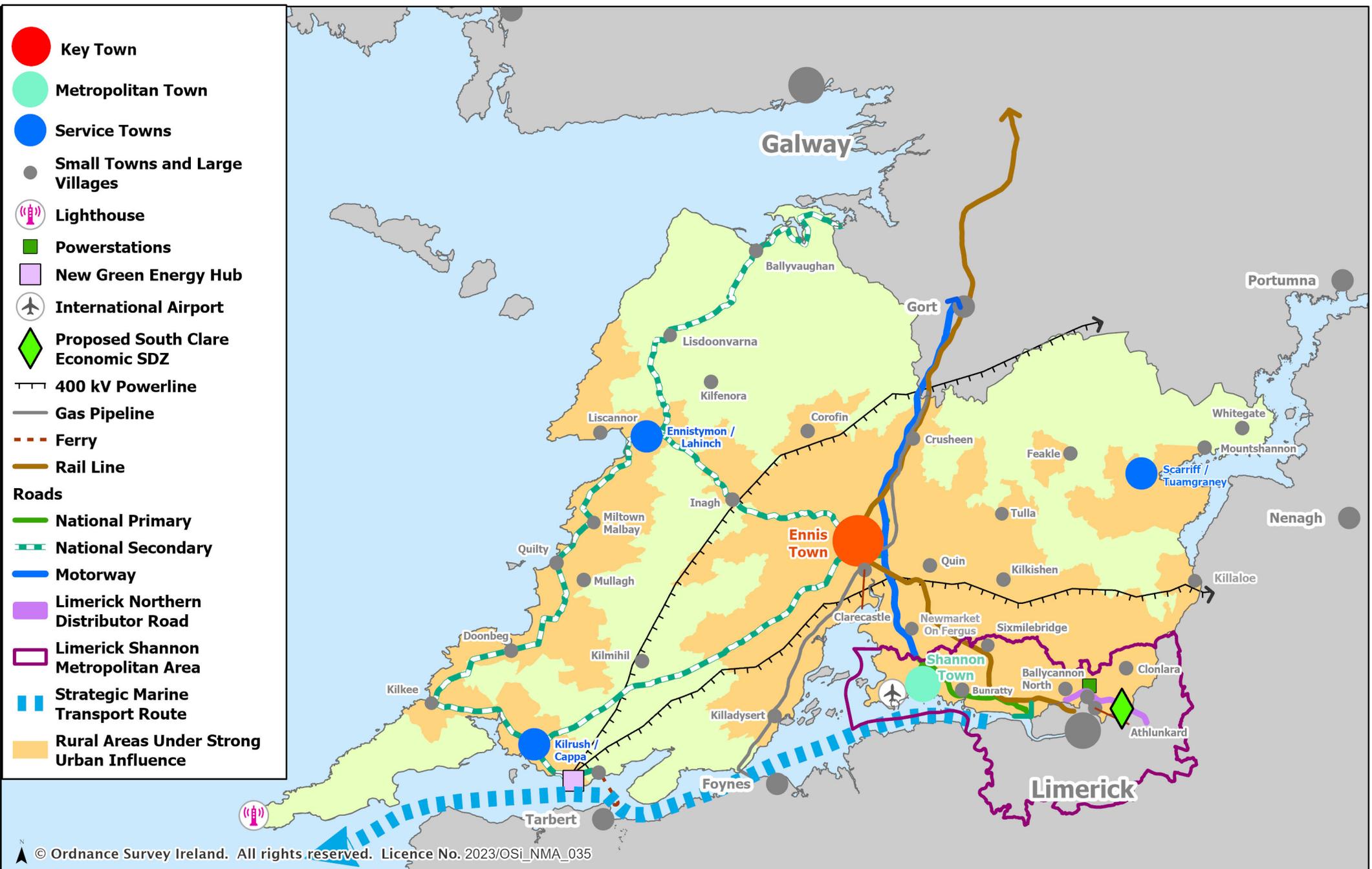
3.5 Conclusion

The objectives that will deliver on the Core Strategy are outlined in the chapters that follow. Firstly, the Urban and Rural Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy for County Clare is outlined, and this is followed by a chapter on housing which sets out how the housing needs of the people of County Clare will be met during the lifetime of this plan. Chapters 6 and 7 address economic development and enterprise, and retail development, respectively. Chapter 8 outlines the framework for rural development and natural resources. The county’s tourism industry is an important part of the economy in County Clare and is dealt with in Chapter 9. The concept of healthy and sustainable communities is built on in Chapter 10 which deals with community development and support for the provision and enhancement of social infrastructure. Chapter 11 deals with physical infrastructure, environment and energy.

The sustainable future development of the Shannon Estuary is addressed in Chapter 12. Chapter 13 relates to a similar theme and deals with the important issues of marine and coastal zone management, including coastal flooding and future development in coastal areas. The management and enhancement of the landscape, biodiversity, natural heritage and green infrastructure, and architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage is the focus of Chapters 14, 15 and 16, respectively.

The enhancement and future growth of towns and villages throughout the county is addressed in Chapter 17 whilst promoting quality in the public realm, placemaking and built environment is the focus of Chapter 18.

Chapter 19 sets the framework for more detailed settlement plans and land-use zonings in the county. Finally, Chapter 20 sets the context for the implementation and monitoring of the plan whilst also setting out the mitigation measures necessary to ensure that implementation does not have a negative impact on the environment of County Clare.



Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Map 3A Core Strategy

Date: April 2023 Scale: Not To Scale

Chapter 4 Urban and Rural Spatial Strategy

Goal IV:

A county with strong and balanced urban and rural areas providing key services and a good quality of life and where people with social or economic requirements to live in the countryside are accommodated.

Chapter 4 Table of Contents:

- 4.0 Introduction
- 4.1 Development Plan Aims
- 4.2 Settlement Strategy
 - 4.2.1 Introduction
 - 4.2.2 Compact Growth
 - 4.2.3 Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy
 - 4.2.4 Linked Settlements & Settlement Networks
 - 4.2.5 Managing the Growth of Settlements
 - 4.2.6 Single Houses in the Countryside
 - 4.2.7 Site Suitability
- 4.3 Implementation and Monitoring of Settlement Policy

4.0 Introduction

The Settlement Strategy for County Clare seeks to ensure a good quality of life for those who live and/or work in the county through the achievement of a network of vibrant settlements, strong rural areas which sustain and increase population levels, and job/service provision. The Strategy guides where, when, and how new development should take place in a manner, scale and form that is appropriate, having regard to national policy, the settlement hierarchy and target populations (outlined in Chapter 3), and the local characteristics and physical constraints of individual areas within the county.

This Chapter sets out Clare County Council's approach to distributing the target populations in a balanced manner and in line with the requirements of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region. A synopsis of the planning and development strategies for rural areas and each of the settlement types in the county is also set out. This Chapter builds on the objectives set out in the Core Strategy of Chapter 3.

4.1 Development Plan Aims

The development objectives necessary to sustain a healthy network of towns and villages in a range of urban and rural locations throughout the county are set out in this Chapter. In accordance with the overall vision of the Plan, it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To provide an Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy to manage population growth/targets and associated housing needs and to achieve balanced development within the county;
- To promote an appropriate balance of development across the county by developing a hierarchy of high quality and vibrant settlements and the sustainable growth of these settlements proportionate to their scale and appropriate to their function and location within the county;
- To ensure that Ennis 'Key Town' and Shannon 'Metropolitan Town' are drivers of growth and development in both County Clare and the Southern Region; and
- To ensure that the specific needs of rural communities are identified and that the objectives of the Development Plan seek to sustain and renew established rural communities.

4.2 Settlement Strategy

4.2.1 Introduction

The Settlement Strategy aims to ensure that future development is directed in a balanced, sustainable and plan-led manner across the county. It recognises the roles of the countryside

and of each of the designated towns, villages and clusters in Clare in achieving a balanced Settlement Strategy for the county.

The settlement statements and plans contained in Volume 3 of this Plan set out detailed policies, objectives and land use zonings for every settlement in accordance with their position and role in the Settlement Hierarchy. The position of a settlement within the Settlement Hierarchy provides an indication of the potential scale of population growth permissible over the lifetime of the Plan and therefore plays a key role in the appropriate delivery of the population targets outlined in Chapter 3.

The Settlement Strategy aims are linked with and support relevant policies and objectives elsewhere in the plan to ensure that in addition to being centres of population the settlements also deliver on their roles as employment and service centres.

4.2.2 Compact Growth

The National Planning Framework's National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth is fundamental for achieving the sustainable growth of our urban settlements. Clare County Council acknowledges the social and economic benefits of more compact settlements and is committed to delivering compact growth, through active land management and initiatives to revitalise urban settlements. The policies and objectives in this Plan promote the efficient use of urban lands to achieve compact growth, through the intensification, consolidation and positive revitalisation of our towns and villages throughout the county.

The compact growth concept requires the provision of higher densities and mixed-use developments in urban settlements, to ensure a more efficient use of scarce lands and to optimise public investment in infrastructure. This requires the integration of land use and transport, an intensification of use of existing underutilised lands and the consolidation of the built environment through the development of brownfield and infill lands, as well as the reuse of vacant and derelict buildings in urban settlements. In conjunction with the provision of social and green infrastructure, the principles of compact growth set the foundations for a higher quality of life, through the promotion of mixed-use settlements, served by sustainable modes of transport and the creation of an attractive environment in which to live, work and do business.

Successful compact growth requires enhanced connectivity and accessibility for pedestrians and cyclists, as well as the provision of viable public transport services through the concentration of higher density developments at strategic employment locations and along public transport nodes. There are many sustainability benefits of the compact growth concept compared to that of urban sprawl or greenfield developments at the edge of settlements. Such benefits include maximising the viability and cost efficiency of providing public transport and other infrastructure, as well as reduced car dependency and commuting times, which will facilitate the mitigation of climate change through a reduction in traffic congestion, energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

In accordance with the National Strategic Outcome of Compact Growth, the National Planning Framework requires 50% of all new housing in Limerick City suburbs (in Clare) be within the existing City and Suburbs built-up footprint, through the development of brownfield and infill sites and revitalisation. Across the rest of the County, 30% of all new homes are to be provided within the existing built-up footprints of settlements.

The Local Authority acknowledges the social and economic benefits of more compact settlements as outlined above. Therefore, this Plan will continue to support the sequential approach to the delivery of development, with priority given to the revitalisation of settlements and the consolidation of the existing built environment, through the development of brownfield, infill and backland urban sites.

4.2.3 Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy

Ennis

Ennis, with a population of 25,276 people is the largest settlement in County Clare, is the largest town in Munster, and is the fifth largest settlement in the Southern Region. It is designated as a ‘Key Town’ in the RSES, and as both the County Town for Clare and a University Town it is an important residential, educational, service and commercial centre which provides significant levels of employment. Ennis has a strong community focus, a young and well-educated population, a dynamic business and commercial sector and a tourism sector based on its national and international renown for heritage and cultural excellence. It is recognised in the RSES as a critical element of the Limerick-Shannon-Ennis triangle which is the economic engine of the Mid-West. Ennis is at the top of the Settlement Hierarchy for the county. The RSES identifies Ennis for significant population growth of a greater than 30% increase by 2040. The ‘Ennis 2040 – Economic and Spatial Strategy’ is a long-term strategy for the sustainable development of the ‘Key Town’ and addresses the measures required to manage economic, infrastructural, environmental and physical challenges, including transportation, demographic and population change, retail vitality and viability, availability of modern office and employment accommodation, environmental considerations and Town Centre accessibility.

Development Plan Objective: Ennis	
CDP 4.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support Ennis as a self-sustaining, regional economic driver and as a key location for investment choice in the county and the Southern Region, and to support its enhanced development based on its strategic location relative to Limerick and Galway Cities, Shannon International Airport and the Atlantic Economic Corridor as well as its role as a centre of employment and economic activity; b) To support the implementation of Ennis 2040 Economic And Spatial Strategy to set the long-term economic and spatial strategy

for the County Town with an agreed focus on an economic future and spatial pattern to 2040 and beyond;

c) To prepare and implement a local area plan for the Ennis Town and Environs area incorporating a Local Transport Plan, a Strategic Environmental Assessment and an Appropriate Assessment during the lifetime of this Development Plan;

d) To actively work to strengthen cross sectoral collaboration with neighbouring towns and cities, strengthening physical, social and economic links with Limerick and Galway in particular;

e) To seek investment and to support the delivery of holistic infrastructure that will facilitate and accommodate sustainable growth in Ennis, subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments;

f) To develop Ennis into a centre for lifelong learning and to support the further development of higher education facilities in the Town;

g) To support initiatives which seek to strengthen and develop niche retail and mixed-use services in Ennis town centre;

h) To support and promote placemaking in Ennis which would include public realm regeneration and urban renewal initiatives which incorporate SuDs and public private partnership approaches for town centre regeneration;

i) To seek the sustainable development of tourism facilities that enhance diverse tourism roles for Ennis and to seek investment in services to cater for increased visitor numbers;

j) To integrate land use and transport planning such that new employment and residential development should be consolidated in a manner which renders it serviceable by public transport and accessible, at the local level, by walking, cycling and public transport;

k) To promote and encourage sustainable transport, and in particular to make it convenient and attractive to walk, cycle or use public transport.

l) To support climate adaptation initiatives within Ennis Town and surrounding areas to deliver on the objective of Ennis becoming Ireland's first Climate Adaptive Town;

m) To monitor the cumulative effect of grants of planning permission on available wastewater capacity where connection to a public wastewater treatment plant is included as part of a development proposal;

n) To support Ennis in realising its full potential in grey, green, and blue infrastructure;

o) To promote appropriate measures from the "Biodiversity for Low and Zero Carbon Buildings; A Technical Guide for New Builds" to all regeneration and urban renewal projects-;

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| | <p>p) To support the Purple Flag accreditation, and any subsequent initiative for the promotion/development of Ennis as a quality town;</p> <p>q) To support increased levels of town centre living and to assess the potential of the development of a modern family-oriented town centre living pilot project during the lifetime of the Plan.</p> |
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Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area includes Limerick City Centre at the core and the continuous built-up area of Limerick City and Suburbs (as defined by the Central Statistics Office). Shannon in County Clare is the largest metropolitan town with a population of 9,729 in 2016.

The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) area which is almost evenly split between Limerick and Clare (with 49% located in Co. Clare), includes the following settlements in County Clare:

- Ardnacrusha;
- Athlunkard;
- Ballycannon North;
- Bunratty;
- Clonlara;
- Cratloe;
- O'Briensbridge;
- Parteen;
- Sixmilebridge;
- Shannon

The overall population of the MASP as of the 2016 census was 132,420 with 27,468 in County Clare and the remainder in Limerick City and suburbs. The Regional Policy Objectives as set out in the RSES have informed the objectives of the Development Plan for the MASP areas and the future development of the MASP area is a cross-cutting theme of the Development Plan.

Development Strategy

The policies of this Development Plan support the delivery of key growth for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area in the NPF, RSES and MASP, having regard to the constraints in place, particularly in the Limerick suburbs area of Clare, in relation to wastewater and road infrastructure.

To achieve appropriate growth in the Clare LSMA area, the Core Strategy identifies a population growth target of 2,279 people and 1,406 housing units for the plan period. It is

acknowledged that the population figure is slightly under that set out in the RSES, however the Limerick Suburbs area is currently constrained by a lack of wastewater treatment in Ardnacrusha, the lack of commitment on the LNDR and severe traffic congestion in Athlunkard, and also by the need to maintain the identity of Parteen as a separate settlement from Athlunkard. The population and housing allocation to the Limerick suburbs is deemed the maximum possible allocation, given the constraints in place for this plan period. The population allocation will be reviewed in future plan cycles.

The emphasis for the development of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area is on compact growth, which requires the provision of higher densities and mixed-use developments in urban settlements, in order to ensure a sufficient use of zoned lands and to optimise public investment in infrastructure. This requires the integration of land use and transportation planning, the intensification of use of existing underutilised land and the consolidation of the built environment through the development of brownfield and infill lands, as well as the reuse of vacant and derelict properties.

To support the economic growth of the Metropolitan Area, Clare County Council, in partnership with University of Limerick, are currently seeking designation of the University of Limerick – Clare Campus lands as a Strategic Development Zone. The scale of the site at 110 hectares and its integrity as an entity dictates that the site is best master-planned and developed in a plan-led manner as an SDZ. In addition, Shannon is an established centre of both foreign direct investment and indigenous enterprise. The Shannon Free Zone, Smithstown and Westpark Business Campus accommodate companies that make a significant contribution to the local and national economy each year. Following adoption of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, a Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan will be prepared, which will protect and promote Shannon as an attractive location for industrial/enterprise development. Further details and policy support for these locations, as employment generators, and as locations critical to the realisation of the vision to the MASP, can be found in Chapter 6 Economic Development and Enterprise. The Joint Retail Strategy for the Metropolitan Area creates the appropriate conditions necessary to foster a healthy and vibrant retail environment, enhancing the vitality of urban areas and effectively managing and supporting change.

The Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) is a cross-county Metropolitan scale document, which sets out the policies and objectives of the National Transport Authority, Limerick City and County Council, Clare County Council and Transport Infrastructure Ireland, at a level appropriate to that scale. The function of the LSMATS is to provide a long-term strategic planning framework for the integrated development of transport infrastructure and services for the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA). LSMATS will enhance active and public modes of transport and provide opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, reducing carbon emissions and traffic congestion.

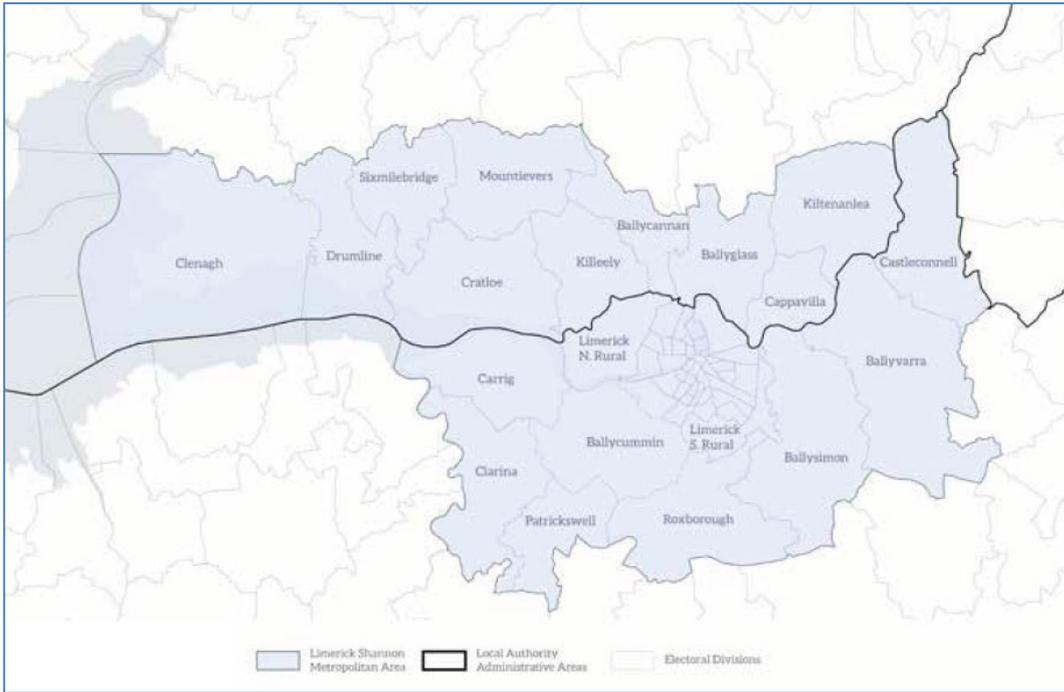


Figure 4.1 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

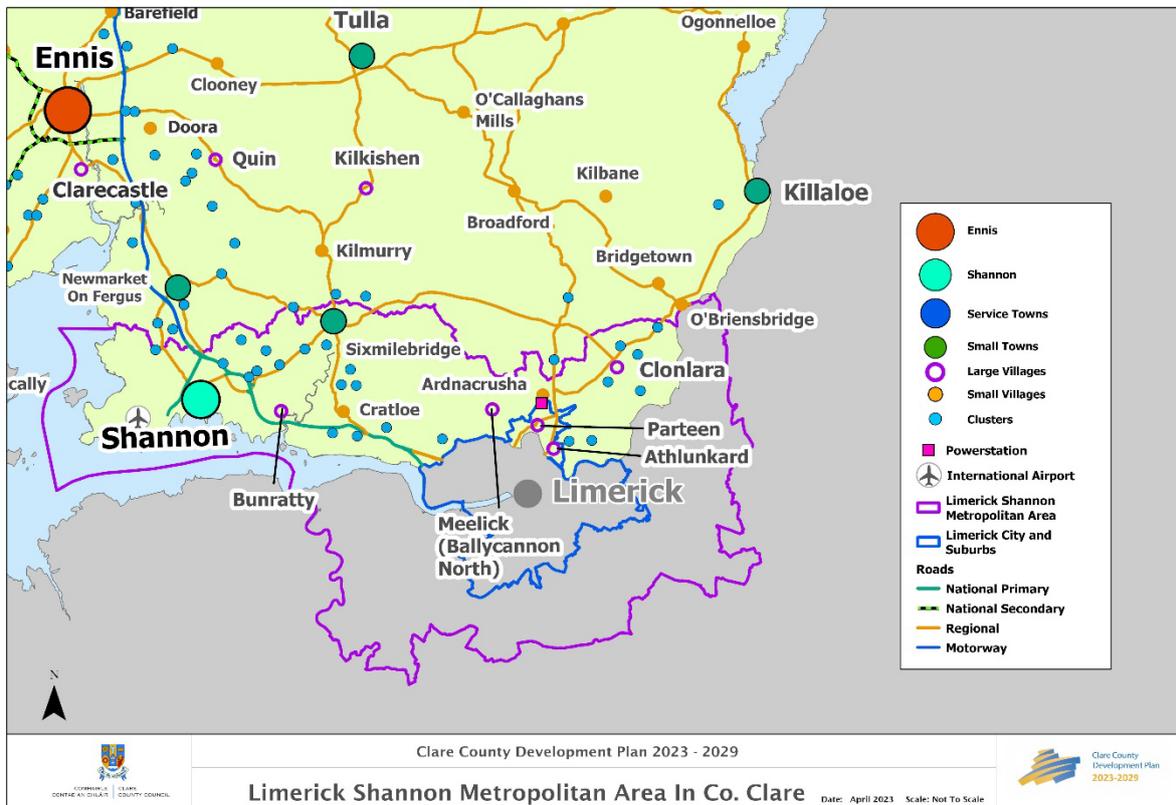


Figure 4.2 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area in County Clare

Development Plan Objective: Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area	
CDP 4.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To strengthen the role of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area as an international location of scale, a complement to Dublin and a primary driver of sustainable economic and population growth in the Southern Region; b) To promote and to seek investment to sustainably develop the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area as a cohesive metropolitan area with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Compact and sustainable growth and regeneration of Shannon; ii) Active land management initiatives to deliver housing and employment locations in a sustainable, infrastructure-led manner. c) To seek co-ordinated investment and delivery of holistic infrastructure packages across State Departments and infrastructure delivery agencies as they apply to the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and seek further investments to deliver on the Metropolitan Area Goals set out in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the National Development Plan; d) To protect, manage and improve the coherence of the Natura 2000 Network through enhanced ecological connectivity; e) To support the sustainable delivery of the Strategic Investment Priorities identified by the National Development Plan for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and progress co-ordination between the principal stakeholders for delivery to achieve the vision and objectives identified for the MASP; (f) To cooperate with the NTA, TII and Limerick City and County Council in the delivery of the LSMATS; g) To promote the sustainable implementation of innovative, collaborative projects through the Urban Regeneration and Development, Rural Regeneration and Development, Climate Action and Disruptive Technologies funds for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area; h) To ensure the investment in and the delivery of the Sustainable Place Framework delivering quality of place attributes as an incentive to attract people to live, work and visit; i) To carry out a site selection process which considers all environmental issues and which identifies suitable sites for regeneration and development; j) To sustainably manage future development within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, taking account of its environmental,

	ecological, heritage and landscape values with a particular focus on building a climate resilient growth area.
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Development Plan Objective: Compact Growth in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area	
CDP 4.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To achieve compact growth in the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Supporting the creation and role of an Active Land Management Unit, with a remit to focus on the Metropolitan Area and compact growth targets; b) Working with the Land Development Agency to progress housing and employment delivery in existing centres, and focusing on co-ordinating and developing large, strategically located publicly owned land banks, to reduce vacancy and to regenerate key sites; c) Supporting initiatives that facilitate the regeneration of derelict buildings and vacant sites for the provision of high-quality, environmentally friendly Near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) affordable housing; d) The implementation of strategic land reserve initiatives; e) The preparation of design briefs for strategic sites; f) Seeking design competitions for key strategic sites that deliver greater density, mixed uses where appropriate, sustainable design, smart technology, green infrastructure and public gain through good design; g) Implementing active land management within areas designated as site specific regeneration areas under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and other locations in need of renewal, including the use of site briefs and masterplans for a design-led approach to renewal; h) The identification of public realm and site regeneration initiatives which combine, on an area-wide basis, opportunities for regeneration of privately-owned underutilised sites, publicly-owned underutilised sites, private and public buildings and upgrade of parks, streetscapes and public realm areas; i) The creation of continually updated data bases identifying brownfield, infill sites, regeneration areas and infrastructure packages to enable progress towards achieving compact growth targets; and j) Through active land management initiatives, identifying strategic locations for residential growth, responding to the growth targets and achievement of compact growth and employment growth.

Shannon

Shannon Town was developed from the 1960's onwards, in response to the growth and development of Shannon International Airport and the Shannon Free Zone Industrial Estate. With a population of 9,729 people in 2016, Shannon has developed as a world leader in aviation, manufacturing and distribution and occupies a strategic position in the west of Ireland. As a critical driver within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Shannon is a centre of international business, has strong synergies with Limerick City, Ennis and the wider region and is central to delivering the ambition for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area's economic, social diversity and tourism development. The RSES identifies that the population of Shannon should increase by more than 30% by 2040, which is significant population growth. The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan identifies a significant opportunity for Shannon to expand as a globally-recognised centre for software engineering/aviation/logistics and supports Shannon as a centre for research and development for autonomous vehicles. A new Local Area Plan to guide and support the future development of Shannon Town and its Environs will be prepared during the lifetime of this Development Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon	
CDP 4.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that Shannon, in its critical role as a metropolitan town within the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area, is a driver of prosperity for the Metropolitan Area, county and region by harnessing its strategic location on the Atlantic Economic Corridor, its high-quality connectivity, its employment base, its international airport, and other competitive advantages; b) To seek investment to regenerate and rejuvenate Shannon Town and Environs Area, through the preparation and implementation of a new Local Area Plan, the enhancement of transport services, amenity and design quality, and the delivery of smart technologies, in order to drive public sector-led recovery, and to sustainably influence and support the Metropolitan Area and the wider county/region; c) To seek investment and to support the delivery of holistic infrastructure that will facilitate and accommodate sustainable growth in Shannon, subject to the outcome of the planning process and environmental assessments; d) To have regard to the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan, which provides the basis for a new Urban Regeneration and Development Fund application, in the preparation of the Local Area Plan; e) To support and promote placemaking in Shannon, which would include public realm regeneration and urban renewal initiatives

	<p>and public private partnership approaches to town centre regeneration;</p> <p>f) To cooperate with the NTA, TII and Limerick City and County Council in the delivery of the LSMATS;</p> <p>g) To support the development of housing and ancillary facilities in Shannon in order to facilitate the growth of Shannon’s population by 30% by 2040; and</p> <p>h) To monitor the cumulative effect of grants of planning permission on available wastewater capacity, where connection to a public wastewater treatment plant is included as part of a development proposal.</p>
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Service Towns

The designated Service Towns in County Clare are Kilrush/Cappa, Ennistymon/Lahinch and Scarriff/Tuamgraney. They have been designated as service towns, due to their role as important service centres in their respective Municipal Districts and due to their role as drivers of growth for their surrounding hinterlands. The detailed strategies for each of these Service Towns are outlined in their individual settlement statements and land use plans, contained in Volume 3 of this Development Plan and these reflect the local characteristics of these settlements.

Development Plan Objective: Service Towns	
CDP 4.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To ensure that the Service Towns are individual drivers of growth and prosperity for their respective catchments, by consolidating their administrative, retail and service bases, protecting and enhancing their distinctive town centre characteristics and natural landscape settings, and maximising their role for sub-regional growth;</p> <p>b) To work with the relevant bodies and to seek investment for the timely and sustainable delivery of holistic infrastructures, to enhance the levels of amenity and design quality, and to regenerate and rejuvenate the Service Towns throughout the County; and</p> <p>c) To monitor the cumulative effect of grants of planning permission on available wastewater capacity, where connection to a public wastewater treatment plant is included as part of a development proposal.</p>

Small Towns

The seven designated Small Towns in County Clare are Kilkee, Killaloe, Lisdoonvarna, Miltown Malbay, Sixmilebridge, Newmarket-on-Fergus and Tulla. These towns are of fundamental importance as employment and tourist centres and as centres for the provision of services and facilities for their resident populations and their rural hinterlands. The strategy for these settlements is to ensure that their existing roles are maintained and further strengthened through measures such as the adequate zoning of lands for development, supporting the concept of settlement networks, seeking investment to regenerate and rejuvenate these settlements, supporting and working with the relevant bodies towards the development of the required ancillary infrastructure, and the adoption of a facilitatory approach towards appropriately-scaled and designed urban development.

The expansion of these towns should be sympathetic to the surrounding areas with a focus on developing brownfield sites and adopting the sequential centre out approach to development. The benefits of compact growth, brownfield redevelopment and the regeneration of underutilised sites within existing settlements include the facilitation of the shift to more sustainable transport modes and the Ten Minute Town concept, increased footfall, the enhancement of the viability of shops, services and public transport, the improvement of connectivity between housing and complementary land uses (i.e. recreation and employment), the addressing of dereliction, vacancy and public realm issues and increases in housing supply. Every effort should be made to improve the public realm in order to make these towns attractive places to live, work and visit. It is recognised that some of these towns have not been in a position to fulfil their role due to deficiencies in water and wastewater services and the Council will work with Irish Water with regard to the resolution of these issues. The strategy for the individual small towns is outlined in more detail in their respective settlement statements and land use plans, set out in Volume 3 of this Development Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Small Towns	
CDP 4.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that the small towns throughout the county continue to act as important local service centres that maintain sustainable communities, help to ensure a good quality environment, provide public transport to the main centres, and provide a high quality of life for those who live in the vicinity; b) To work with the relevant bodies and to seek investment for the timely and sustainable delivery of holistic infrastructure, to enhance the levels of amenity and design quality and to regenerate and rejuvenate the Small Towns throughout the county; c) To ensure that future growth is incremental and balanced in nature, and is relative and appropriate to the scale, size and character of the small towns and to seek to achieve centre out compact growth;

	<p>d) To seek investment in the sustainable development of a “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative in the County and the provision of services and serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the existing footprint of small towns; and</p> <p>e) To monitor the cumulative effect of grants of planning permission on available wastewater capacity, where connection to a public wastewater treatment plant is included as part of a development proposal.</p>
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Large Villages

The designated large villages, of which there are 16 throughout the county, provide a reasonable range of services and facilities to their resident populations and surrounding rural areas. The strategy for large villages is to provide for well-designed residential, commercial and community developments, which are incremental and balanced in nature, and are relative and appropriate to the scale, size and character of the villages. A key priority is to retain community and social facilities within these villages and to encourage indigenous enterprises and service provision. The large villages in County Clare, with their attractive character and community infrastructure, provide opportunities for ‘sites for independent development’ and low density ‘cluster’ style residential developments to act as viable alternatives to single housing in the countryside. The Council will seek investment in this regard to develop the “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative which would augment the delivery of actions by the Council communities and other stakeholders in the provision of services and serviced sites to create build your own home opportunities within the existing footprint of rural settlements, in order to provide new homes to meet housing demand. The areas identified as village growth areas allow for the sustainable compact growth of large villages, providing opportunities for small scale cluster type housing, as well as for other uses appropriate to the function, size and scale of the settlement.

Several of these villages require significant improvements in physical infrastructure (including innovative solutions for wastewater treatment) to facilitate residential and commercial development, and assist in their long term viability as settlements and service centres. The strategy for the individual large villages is outlined in more detail in their respective settlement statements and land use plans, contained in Volume 3 of this Development Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Large Villages	
CDP 4.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To promote the consolidation of the existing large villages through brownfield reuse/redevelopment and through compact growth within the appropriate land use zoning and/or the areas identified for village growth;</p>

- b) To ensure that future growth is incremental and balanced in nature, and is relative and appropriate to the scale, size and character of the villages and to seek to achieve centre-out compact growth;
- c) To work with the relevant bodies and to seek investment for the timely and sustainable delivery of holistic infrastructure, to enhance the levels of amenity and design quality and to regenerate and rejuvenate the large villages throughout the county;
- d) To seek investment in the sustainable development of a ‘New Homes in Small Towns and Villages’ initiative in the county and the provision of services and serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the existing footprint of large villages; and
- e) To ensure that in the case of any development/reuse or redevelopment where connection to an existing wastewater treatment plant is not possible, the provision of a private wastewater treatment system will only be permitted where it can be demonstrated that the proposed system meets standards set out within EU and national legislation and guidance.

Small Villages

The Small Villages of County Clare have a predominantly rural character, with some public/community services such as a church, school, shop, etc. Their attractive character and community infrastructure, provide opportunities for sites for independent development and low-density cluster style residential developments to act as viable alternatives to single housing in the countryside. The Council will seek investment to develop the “New Homes in Small Towns and Villages” initiative in this regard. In addition to small-scale, incremental residential growth, appropriate commercial or employment-generating developments that are of a scale and nature that is sympathetic to the existing village will also be encouraged. Both residential and commercial growth in these settlements will be monitored over the Plan period.

The village boundaries are illustrated on the individual settlement land use plans, which can be found in Volume 3 of this Plan, and a long-term timeframe for the development of these villages is considered to be appropriate. The settlement statements and land use plans for the small villages and the associated Village Growth Area (VGA) designations seek to achieve compact growth through brownfield redevelopment and the regeneration of underutilised sites, to address issues such as dereliction and vacancy, to promote the shift to sustainable transport modes and to enhance the connectivity to, and the viability of, local shops and services. The areas identified as village growth areas allow for the sustainable compact growth of small villages, providing opportunities for small scale cluster type housing, as well as for other uses appropriate to the function, size and scale of the settlement.

Development Plan Objective: Small Villages	
CDP 4.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To promote the consolidation of the existing small villages through brownfield reuse/redevelopment and through compact growth within the designated village growth areas.</p> <p>b) To ensure that future growth is incremental and small scale in nature, and is relative and appropriate to the scale, size and character of the villages and to seek to achieve centre-out compact growth;</p> <p>c) To work with the relevant bodies and to seek investment for the timely and sustainable delivery of holistic infrastructure, to enhance the levels of amenity and design quality and to regenerate and rejuvenate the Small Villages throughout the county; and</p> <p>d) To seek investment in the sustainable development of the ‘New Homes in Small Towns and Villages’ initiative in the county and the provision of services and serviced sites to create “build your own home” opportunities within the existing footprint of small villages.</p>

Clusters

These are the smallest type of settlement in the hierarchy and their character reflects traditional building patterns with a loose collection of rural dwellings, clustered around one or more focal points. Focal points may include existing rural houses around a crossroad or a community or social facility such as a shop, school, church or post office. The strategy for these settlements is to facilitate a small number of additional dwellings and/or small enterprises to consolidate the existing pattern of development around the focal points and utilise existing services in the area. To meet the needs of those wishing to settle in rural areas, the provisions of Objective CDP 4.14 (i.e. Social or Economic Housing Need requirement) will not apply to applicants for single houses within the designated cluster boundaries.

Development Plan Objective: Clusters	
CDP 4.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To ensure that clusters throughout the county maintain their existing character providing only for very small scale growth of dwellings and/or small enterprises where they can be suitably integrated with respect to the setting and context.</p>

The Countryside

The Countryside refers to those rural parts of the county outside of designated settlement boundaries. The National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines recognise and support the long tradition of people living in the countryside and objectives relating to this are

included in Section 4.2.5 of this Plan. The Countryside, apart from being a place to live, is the source of the majority of our natural assets, and therefore plays an important role in terms of employment, tourism and leisure. The strategy for the Countryside is to ensure that it is appropriately managed and that it continues to play its role in a balanced manner having regard to its carrying capacity and environmental constraints.

Development Plan Objective: Countryside	
CDP 4.10	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that the countryside continues to play its role as a place to live, work, recreate and visit, having careful regard to the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements, the carrying capacity of the countryside, siting and design issues and environmental sensitivities.

4.2.4 Linked Settlements & Settlement Networks

County Clare has a vibrant mix of settlements that contribute to its attractiveness as a place to live, work, visit and invest and which are critical to protecting the vibrancy of local communities and the character of the county. These settlements have been strengthened over the years by active Development Plan objectives to direct development and services to appropriate locations and to promote economic investment in our towns and villages. However, the designation of individual settlements is not the sole determinant of the achievement of successful renewal and growth. The growth, prosperity and sustainable development of County Clare is significantly enhanced through communities working together to develop mutually beneficial relationships. The building of synergies and relationships between settlements assists in the achievement of economies of scale, builds on existing strengths, creates greater resilience to challenges, and facilitates enhanced capacities to pursue opportunities.

Linked Settlements

The Council recognises that there are several adjacent ‘linked settlements’ in the county including Ennistymon/Lahinch, Scarriff/Tuamgraney, Kilrush/Cappa and Miltown Malbay/Spanish Point. In the case of Killaloe/Ballina the linked settlement crosses both the county boundary and the River Shannon. While retaining their own identities, these linked settlements, due to their proximity to one another and their complementary roles, will be encouraged to work together to share assets and strengths, and to generate the critical mass of population needed to allow them to act as a focus for service provision and economic growth for their surrounding rural areas.

Settlement Networks

The Council further recognises that the development of inter and/or multi-settlement relationships, beyond those as outlined above, presents opportunities for collaborative

projects with shared benefits, so as to fully harness the potential of opportunities and the management of challenges.

Settlement networks comprise of groupings of towns and villages (including cross boundary) which share geographic location, economic assets and other resources and which contribute specialisms, which if combined, can provide a strategic opportunity to drive the regional economy. Examples of such settlement networks could include the Galway, Ennis, Shannon and Limerick network (a potential network of Key Towns and Metropolitan Areas sharing assets on the Atlantic Economic Corridor), those located along, or in proximity to, tourism corridors or assets (Flagmount-Caher-Killanena), those within the metropolitan area, estuary settlements (e.g. Ballynacally-Labasheeda-Kildysert) and settlements with complimentary services and roles.

Development Plan Objective: Settlement Networks	
CDP 4.11	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the concept of settlement networks, to assist collaborative projects and the sharing of assets and strengths, to enhance the viability of County Clare’s towns, villages and rural communities, in order to facilitate the maintenance and expansion of existing population levels, services and roles.

4.2.5 Managing the Growth of Settlements

In order to achieve the objectives as outlined for the Settlement Strategy, appropriate monitoring and management must take place. The following are the objectives of the Council in this regard.

Development Plan Objective: Monitoring and Implementation of Settlement Strategy	
CDP 4.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To achieve the delivery of strategic, plan-led, co-ordinated and balanced development of the settlements throughout the county; b) To monitor carefully the scale, rate and location of newly permitted developments and apply appropriate development management measures to ensure compliance with the Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy, including the population and housing targets for the county.

Development Plan Objectives: Planned Growth of Settlements	
CDP 4.13	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To ensure compact growth through the regeneration of brownfield sites and that the sequential approach is applied to the assessment of

	<p>proposals, for development in towns and villages, and to ensure that new developments are of a scale and character that is appropriate to the area in which they are planned;</p> <p>b) To restrict single and/or multiple large scale developments which would lead to rapid completion of any settlement within its development boundary, and in excess of its capacity to absorb development in terms of physical infrastructure (i.e. water, wastewater, surface water, lighting, footpaths, access and similar) and social infrastructure (such as schools, community facilities and similar).</p>
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4.2.6 Single Houses in the Countryside

County Clare has a long tradition of people living in dispersed settlement patterns in the countryside, where areas such as rural townlands remain as important units of identity. The Council will continue to support this tradition in a positive manner that is consistent with the requirements of the National Planning Framework, the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines ‘Sustainable Rural Housing - Guidelines for Planning Authorities (DoEHLG)’. This section of the Development Plan sets out how the development of single houses will be accommodated in the rural areas outside of the boundaries of towns, villages and clusters.

Rural Area Types

The National Planning Framework (NPF), the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) and the previously referenced Guidelines require the Council to identify the different types of rural areas within the county and to tailor policies that are responsive to:

- The varying characteristics of rural areas; and
- The different housing requirements of urban and rural communities.

The NPF recognises the importance of sustaining rural areas, specifically through National Policy Objective (NPO) 15 which is set out below:

Support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging growth and arresting decline in areas that have experienced low population growth or decline in recent decades and by managing the growth of areas that are under strong urban influence to avoid overdevelopment, while sustaining vibrant rural communities’.

The NPF in NPO19 requires a distinction to be made between rural areas under strong urban influence and elsewhere in providing for the development of rural houses in the countryside. The RSES reinforces this through its requirement for core strategies of development plans to identify areas under strong urban influence in the hinterlands of settlements and to set the appropriate rural housing policy response to avoid ribbon and over-spill development from

urban areas, to support revitalised towns and villages, to achieve sustainable compact growth targets and to protect the rural resource for rural communities, including people with an established local connection to the area.

The Council will ensure that development of the open countryside takes place in a manner that is compatible with the policy objectives of the NPF and the RSES, whilst ensuring the protection of key economic, environmental, biodiversity and cultural / heritage assets such as the road network, water quality and important landscapes.

To achieve this, the Council must distinguish between rural-generated housing (that is for those with a demonstrable economic or social need to reside in a specific rural area) and urban-generated housing (that is for those with no demonstrable economic or social need to reside in a specific rural area). These distinctions are necessary to ensure that the housing requirements of people who require a house for their permanent occupation in rural areas on the grounds of either social or economic need are facilitated.

Urban generated pressure for housing, where inappropriately managed, can result in ribbon development and piecemeal/haphazard development in areas such as approach roads to larger settlements. This creates issues as these settlements expand in relation to:

1. The orderly and efficient development of newly developing areas on the edges of towns;
2. Obstructing alignments for future provision of infrastructure;
3. Undermining the viability of urban public transport due to low densities; and
4. Attendant later problems in terms of demands for higher public expenditure.

Such development is therefore more appropriately located in the existing settlements (or well planned extensions to them).

1. Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence

Rural Areas under Strong Urban Influence display the greatest pressures for development due to:

- Proximity to the immediate environs or close commuting catchment of large towns.
- Rapidly rising population.
- Location in areas of considerable pressure for development of housing due to proximity to urban centres.
- Proximity to major transport corridors with ready access to urban areas.

The Planning Authority applied an evidence-based approach to the development of the rural housing policy for the county which included the following:

- An analysis of commuter catchments for the main employment centres of the town of Ennis and both the Limerick-Shannon and Galway Metropolitan Areas;

- The analysis and mapping of data on the number of planning applications for single rural houses submitted over the past 10 years;
- An analysis of Census data for 1996, 2006 and 2016 to identify areas experiencing population growth, stagnation and decline;
- An analysis of population density;
- An analysis of the county's Environmental, Scenic and Heritage Sensitivities.

The rural areas under strong urban influence are shown in Volume 2 (Maps). In these areas, the key objectives of the Council are:

- a) To facilitate the genuine housing requirements of persons with a demonstrable economic or social need to live in these rural areas.
- b) To direct urban-generated development to areas zoned for new housing development in the adjoining urban centres, towns, villages and clusters as identified in the County Settlement Strategy and to seek to enhance the vitality and viability of these settlements.

In addition to the issues outlined above, development pressure on sensitive scenic and coastal areas of the county must be addressed, given that there is limited capacity to accommodate individual houses in these areas. These areas include the Burren, Loop Head, the Atlantic Coastline, Slieve Aughty, Lough Derg, and the Shannon Estuary. They are collectively known as Heritage Landscapes and are discussed in more detail in Chapter 14. There is also an important network of scenic routes in the county that must be afforded adequate protection. In these areas the objective of the Council is to facilitate rural-generated housing subject to the normal site suitability and technical requirements.

2. Remaining Rural Areas

These areas comprise of all other rural areas outside of the identified pressure areas under strong urban influence. It is recognised that sustaining smaller community areas is important and as such, it is considered appropriate to facilitate rural housing, in accordance with the principles of proper planning and sustainable development. In these areas, the Council recognises the importance of retaining population and supporting the rural economy, while seeking to consolidate the existing rural town and village network.

In these areas the key objectives of the Council are:

- a) To accommodate demands for individual houses for permanent occupation as they arise subject to site suitability, technical considerations and compliance with siting and design criteria for rural housing in statutory guidelines and plans.
- b) To maintain and strengthen existing settlements.

Objectives and Criteria

In order to respond to the challenges outlined above and deliver on the requirements of the NPF, the RSES and the Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines, a different policy response is proposed for each of the following:

- a) New single houses in the countryside within the ‘Areas of Special Control’.
- b) New single houses in the countryside outside the ‘Areas of Special Control’.
- c) New single houses on infill sites in the countryside.
- d) Replacement of sub-standard habitable houses in the countryside.
- e) Refurbishment of derelict houses/structures in the countryside.
- f) New single holiday homes in the countryside.

a) New Single Houses in the Countryside within the ‘Areas of Special Control’

The ‘Areas of Special Control’ are:

- Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence
- Heritage Landscapes
- Sites accessed from Scenic Routes

These are shown in Volume 2 – Maps.

Development Plan Objective:

New Single Houses in the Countryside within the ‘Areas of Special Control’

CDP 4.14

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- i. In the parts of the countryside within the ‘Areas of Special Control’ i.e.:
 - Areas Under Strong Urban Influence
 - Heritage Landscapes
 - Sites accessed from or abutting Scenic Routes

To permit a new single house for the permanent occupation of an applicant who meets the necessary criteria as set out in the following categories.

- ii. To ensure compliance with all relevant environmental legislation as outlined in Objective CDP3.1 and to have regard to the County Clare House Design Guide, with respect to siting and boundary treatments.

Note: Where the proposed site is accessed from a National route or certain Regional routes, the proposal must, in addition to compliance with this objective, also be subject to compliance with objectives CDP11.13 and 11.14 as set out in Chapter 11.

Category A – Economic Need

- i. Such persons shall be defined as persons who by the nature of their work have a demonstrable economic need to reside permanently in the rural area close to their place of work. Such circumstances will normally encompass persons involved in full-time farming, horticulture, forestry, bloodstock or marine-related activities as well as others who can demonstrate a genuine need, because of their occupation or business (not including bed and breakfasts) to live in a specific rural area. Similar part-time occupations can also be considered where it can be demonstrated that it is the predominant occupation and that the ancillary occupation(s) are located within a reasonable daily commuting distance from the site or alternatively may be facilitated through remote working. The applicant must not already own or have owned a house in the surrounding rural area (except in sub-category iii as set out under the Social Need criteria) and needs the dwelling for their own permanent occupation. Where a person's economic need relates to their engagement in farming or bloodstock they shall have a minimum farm size of 12.5 hectares within the local rural area. Where this minimum requirement is not achieved favourable consideration will only be given where a business plan can satisfactorily demonstrate that the person's predominant occupation relates to farming or bloodstock activities on their landholding and which also demonstrates the viability of the activity(s).

Or

- i. An applicant who is considered ineligible under the preceding category may be considered for the construction of a permanent home in the rural Area Under Special Control, subject to being able to satisfy the Planning Authority of their commitment to operate a full-time business (not including bed and breakfasts), from their proposed home in a rural area, as part of their planning application, in order for example, to discourage commuting to towns or cities. The applicant must not already own or have owned a house in the surrounding rural area (except in sub-category iii as set out under the Social Need criteria) and needs the dwelling for their own permanent occupation. Applicants must be able to submit evidence that:
 - Demonstrates that the nature of their employment or business is compatible with those specified in the demonstrable economic need criteria for rural Areas Under Special Control (i.e. that they are serving a predominantly local rural business need).
 - Their business will contribute to and enhance the rural community in which they seek to live.

For the two Economic Need categories outlined above, the documentation available/required will vary depending on the nature of the economic activity. Examples of the information to be submitted with the application include:

- Details of the functional requirement to reside either at or close to their rural based business.
- The overall extent of the landholding and the location(s) of same.
- The nature of the operations associated with the economic activity.
- The planning history associated with the economic activity (where available).
- Buildings and physical infrastructure requirements associated with the economic activities.
- Number of persons employed (or to be employed).
- Livestock and herd numbers (if applicable).
- Participation in government schemes/ programmes (e.g. Bord Bia Quality Assurance, Basic Payment Scheme (BPS), GLAS, or any similar/updated programmes or schemes).
- Any other information that would support the application.

Category B – Social Need

- i. A person who is an intrinsic member of a local rural community who was born within the local rural area, or who is living or has lived permanently in the local rural area for a minimum of 10 years either as one continuous period or cumulatively over a number of periods prior to making the planning application and who has a demonstrable social need to live in the area. This includes returning emigrants seeking a permanent home in their local rural area who meet these criteria. It also includes persons who were born or lived in a rural area for substantial periods of their lives and where that area is now within an urban settlement boundary/zoned land. The applicant must not already own or have owned a house in the surrounding rural area (except in the exceptional circumstances as set out in sub-category iii below) and needs the dwelling for their own permanent occupation.

Or

- ii. Special consideration shall be given in limited cases for persons who need a dwelling for permanent occupation in a rural area for exceptional health reasons. Any application for permission in this category shall be accompanied by a report or recommendation (and other relevant supporting documentation) from a registered medical practitioner outlining the reasons why it is necessary for the applicant to live in the rural area or to reside near family/carer support (or alternatively requires care support to live in close proximity to them). Where applicable the applicant shall demonstrate why their existing home cannot be adapted to meet their needs and shall also demonstrate why their need for a house cannot be accommodated either in an existing settlement or in the countryside outside of the Areas of Special Control. In instances where the house is proposed to accommodate the person that will provide care for a person already residing in the rural area (such as elderly persons who have resided in the area over 10 years, and/or persons who qualify due to exceptional health reasons) the new dwelling must be sited adjacent to the existing dwelling,

which shall be taken to mean sites that are in close proximity to the dwelling of the person that will be cared for.

Or

- iii. A person who is an intrinsic member of a local rural community, who was born within the local rural area or who is living or has lived permanently in the local rural area for a minimum of 10 years at any stage either as one continuous period or cumulatively over a number of periods prior to making the planning application, who previously owned a home and is no longer in possession of that home due to the home having been disposed of following legal separation / divorce / repossession and can demonstrate an economic or social need for a new home in the rural area.

Rural Area Criteria

The rural area includes the countryside, designated clusters and small villages but excludes those settlements listed within the County Settlement Hierarchy which are urban settlements (Ennis, Shannon, Service Towns, Small Towns and Large Villages). For Rural Areas Under Strong Urban Influence the rural area is defined as the area within 10km of the site. For Heritage Landscapes and sites accessed from or abutting Scenic Routes the rural area is defined as the area within 10km of the site. Where the proposed site is of a greater distance than those as specified herein but the applicant can demonstrate a social or economic need to reside in the rural area these cases will each be considered on their individual merits.

Landscape, Siting & Design Criteria

For proposed sites located in Heritage Landscapes and/or sites that are accessed from or abutting Scenic Routes the applicant will be required to demonstrate that no alternative sites are available in Settled Landscapes, the Shannon Estuary Working Landscape or the Western Corridor Working Landscape. The assessment of an application for a rural house shall have regard to environmental considerations, the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements and siting and design issues and the Clare Rural House Design Guide.

b) New Single Houses in the Countryside outside of the ‘Areas of Special Control’

The ‘Areas of Special Control’ are shown in Volume 2. In the areas outside ‘Areas of Special Control’ the following is the objective of the Development Plan.

Development Plan Objective:

New Single Houses in the Countryside Outside the ‘Areas of Special Control’

CDP 4.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: Within the parts of the countryside outside of the ‘Areas of Special Control’ that is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of the Areas Under Strong Urban Influence;
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- Outside of Heritage Landscapes; and
- Not accessed and/or abutting a designated Scenic Route.

To permit an application for a single house by persons who seek a dwelling as their principal private residence and will therefore contribute to the social and economic wellbeing of the area, subject to high quality siting and design and compliance with all relevant environmental legislation. Any application for a rural house for permanent occupancy must be made in the name of the person who will occupy the house in the first instance. The assessment of an application for a rural house in the countryside Outside of the 'Areas of Special Control' shall have regard to environmental considerations, the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements, siting and design issues and the Clare Rural House Design Guide.

Where the proposed site is accessed from a National route or certain Regional routes, the proposal must in addition to compliance with this objective, also be subject to compliance with objectives CDP11.13 and CDP11.14 as set out in Chapter 11.

c) New Single Rural Houses on Infill Sites

Development Plan Objective

New Single Houses on Infill Sites in the Countryside

CDP 4.16

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

In the case where there is a grouping of rural houses, the development of a small gap site, sufficient to accommodate only one house, within an otherwise substantial and continuously built-up frontage, will be permitted provided it respects the existing development pattern along the frontage in terms of size, scale, siting, plot size and meets normal site suitability requirements. Dwellings constructed on infill sites of this nature must be for the permanent occupation of the applicant. The applicant must not already own or have owned a house in the surrounding rural area (except in the exceptional circumstances as set out in sub-category iii under the Social Need criteria) and needs the dwelling for their own permanent occupation. The siting of new dwellings in the countryside so as to deliberately create a gap site of this nature will not be permitted. In circumstances where these sites occur in the 'Areas of Special Control', unless otherwise specified in this objective the provisions of Objective CDP4.14 (i.e. Economic or Social Need requirement) will not apply. The assessment of an application for a rural house on an infill site shall have regard to environmental considerations, the viability of smaller towns and rural settlements, siting and design issues and the Clare Rural House Design Guide.

d) Replacement of a Substandard Habitable House in the Countryside

Development Plan Objective:

Replacement of a Substandard Habitable House in the Countryside

CDP 4.17	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To permit the proposed demolition of a habitable but substandard house and its replacement with a new single house, subject to normal site suitability considerations; b) To permit the replacement of a house damaged by fire, flood or other natural disaster subject to normal site suitability considerations; c) To require that any proposed replacement dwelling proposal takes into account the 'Bat Mitigation Guidelines for Ireland' produced by the NPWS; d) In circumstances where these sites are located in 'Areas of Special Control' not to apply the provisions of Objective CDP4.14 (i.e. 'Economic or Social Housing Need' requirement) ; and e) Notwithstanding the above, to protect the county's vernacular building stock from demolition where restoration and extension is an option (see Objective 16.4).
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e) Refurbishment of a Derelict House/Structure in the Countryside

Development Plan Objective:

Refurbishment of a Derelict House/Structure in the Countryside

CDP 4.18	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To permit applications for the refurbishment of a derelict house/structure in the countryside provided that :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The external walls are substantially intact and are capable of being refurbished; b) The design of the proposal does not erode the siting and design qualities of the dwelling/ structure. c) The size of any extension takes account of the siting and size of the existing dwelling/structure. d) The design, scale and materials used in the refurbishment and/or extension are in keeping and sympathetic with the existing structure. Contemporary designs and finishes which constitute a modern interpretation of the traditional architectural vernacular of the area will also be considered on a case by case basis. e) Mature landscape features are retained and enhanced, as appropriate. f) Normal planning considerations including but not limited to road safety, amenities, public health, design, protected species (especially Lesser Horseshoe Bats and other bat species) shall take precedence over the 'principle' of encouraging such development, and in particular that for such developments alongside or directly accessed from National Roads, that the provisions of Objective CDP 11.13 shall apply. (Refer to Chapter 11).
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	g) In circumstances where these sites occur in 'Areas of Special Control' the provisions of Objective CDP 4.14 (i.e. 'Economic and Social Housing Need' requirement) will not be applied except where the total or substantial demolition of the existing structure and the construction of a new dwelling are proposed.
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f) New Single Holiday Homes in the Countryside

Development Plan Objective: New Single Holiday Homes in the Countryside	
CDP 4.19	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To restrict new single holiday homes in the Countryside and to direct demand arising from this need to appropriately zoned land within certain settlements. Alternatively, this need can be met through the refurbishment of derelict dwellings/structures.

Table 4.1 Types of Rural Housing Development allowed on Suitable Sites

Development Type	Within Areas of Special Control	Outside Areas of Special Control
New Dwelling (PPR) See objectives CDP 4.14 and CDP 4.15	O	✓
New dwelling (PPR) - Infill site See objective CDP4.16	✓	✓
Replacement of substandard / damaged house See objective CDP4.17	✓	✓
Refurbishment of a derelict structure See objective CDP4.18	✓	✓
Holiday home See Objective CDP4.19	X	X

✓ = Development permitted in principle.

O = Open for consideration subject to criteria in Objective 4.14 “new single houses in the countryside within the areas of special control.”

X = Not permitted.

Note¹: PPR= Principal Private Residence.

- i. For a new single house within areas of special control, a condition shall be attached requiring the dwelling to be the permanent/principal place of residence of the applicant for a period of 7 years.
- ii. For new single dwellings outside areas of special control a condition shall be attached requiring the dwelling to be a permanent/principal private residence but with no restrictions on resale after the first occupancy.

Note²: Where any proposed site is accessed from a national road or certain regional roads the objectives in relation to housing in the countryside must be read in conjunction with objectives CDP 11.13 and CDP 11.14 (Chapter 11).

4.2.7 Site Suitability

The policy considerations outlined in Section 4.2.6 represent only one element in the assessment of an application for dwelling(s) in the countryside. Other considerations relating to siting, design, environment, heritage, amenity and traffic considerations are also of paramount importance in the consideration of any development. The Council will endeavour to resolve any issues arising from these considerations through supplementary guidance and pre-planning application discussions where necessary. In addition, it is proposed to prepare a new Clare Rural House Design Guide during the period of the Development Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Clare Rural House Design Guide

CDP 4.20	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To prepare a new Clare Rural House Design Guide during the period of the Development Plan.
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4.3 Implementation and Monitoring of Settlement Policy

The Settlement Hierarchy and Strategy is based on a clear set of principles, which aim for a properly planned and sustainable settlement pattern for County Clare. The settlement statements and land use plans set out in Volume 3 of this Plan reflect these principles and translate the Settlement Strategy and Core Strategy into clear plans for future growth in the towns and villages of the County. It will be important, through the lifetime of the Plan and beyond, to monitor progress on achieving this properly planned and sustainable settlement pattern for the County. The Council will manage and carefully monitor the nature, scale, rate and location of newly permitted developments in rural and urban areas, in order to assess the degree to which settlement policy objectives are being met across the network of settlements and to take appropriate development management measures as outlined in Section 4.2.4.

Chapter 5 Housing

Goal V: A county with high quality housing at appropriate locations throughout the County, ensuring the development of a range of house types, sizes and tenures to accommodate differing household needs, promote sustainable communities, social integration and inclusion and facilitating a sense of place.

Chapter 5 Table of Contents:

5.0	Introduction
5.1	Strategic Aims
5.2	Housing in County Clare
5.2.1	Housing Strategy
5.2.2	Living in our Towns and Villages
5.2.3	Social and Affordable Housing
5.2.4	Emergency Accommodation
5.2.5	Unfinished Developments and Taking in Charge
5.2.6	Housing Design, Mix and Tenure
5.2.7	Ancillary Living Accommodation
5.2.8	Ancillary Living Criteria
5.2.9	Sites for Independent Development
5.2.10	Traveller Accommodation
5.2.11	Housing and Accommodation for an Ageing Population
5.2.12	Housing for People with Disabilities
5.2.13	Student Accommodation
5.2.14	Holiday Homes
5.2.15	Naming of Developments
5.2.16	Green Infrastructure within Residential Developments
5.2.17	Radon

5.0 Introduction

Clare County Council recognise that the availability of suitable housing is fundamental to the health and wellbeing of the residents of the County. Housing that is appropriate to the needs of the occupants, in locations that have convenient access to essential services and which supports engagement in social and recreational activities is essential to the creation of sustainable and healthy communities and to addressing unsustainable settlement patterns which contribute to climate change. The achievement of such vibrant and sustainable communities is a central theme of this Plan.

Under Section 94 (1) (a) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), each Planning Authority is required to include in its Development Plan ‘a strategy for the purpose of ensuring that proper planning and sustainable development of the area of the development plan provides for the housing of the existing and future population of the area in the manner set out in the strategy’. It is a requirement of the National Planning Framework (NPF) that each Local Authority develop a Housing Need Demand Assessment (HNDA) to ensure that the plan-making system is supported by a robust methodology to inform policies and funding initiatives around housing and associated land requirements.

The Clare County Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment 2023-2029 which is included in Volume 8 of this Plan, outlines the existing and future housing requirements for the County, sets out measures for the Council to plan for and address these needs and plays a key role in translating national and regional housing policies to the local level. In addition to ensuring the adequate availability of appropriately zoned lands Clare County Council also has multiple additional roles in relation to housing in Clare including the regulation of private housing developments and the provision of dwellings for persons in need of accommodation who cannot provide such accommodation through their own resources.

5.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives required for the provision of housing and sustainable communities for the existing and future population of County Clare. In accordance with the overall Vision of the Plan, it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To provide for the existing and future housing needs of the area covered by the Development Plan and to set out how this will be achieved;
- To encourage greater levels of residential occupancy in town and village centres and to ensure our towns, villages and rural areas sustain their population and are vibrant places in which to live;
- To ensure that new housing developments in towns and villages achieve compact growth and contribute to the creation of sustainable and healthy communities;
- To ensure that housing is available to meet the requirements of people of all needs and incomes in County Clare, with an appropriate mix of housing sizes, types and tenures in suitable locations;

- To ensure that sufficient land is zoned for various types of housing over the lifetime of the Plan;
- To require compliance with Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015;
- To actively participate in the housing sector through the provision of public services, infrastructure and services for social, voluntary and private housing; and
- To implement the Clare County Housing Strategy 2023-2029.

5.2 Housing in County Clare

5.2.1 Housing Strategy

This Chapter sets out the housing needs of County Clare, as informed by the Clare Housing Strategy 2023-2029 (Volume 8). The Core Strategy (Chapter 3) outlines the population and housing targets and the amount of land required for residential purposes over the plan period 2023–2029. The Housing Strategy correlates with the Core Strategy and the urban and rural settlement strategy and is underpinned by a Housing Need Demand Assessment HNDA, as required under the NPF. This Chapter also sets out the objectives to accommodate all housing needs in rural and urban locations over the Plan period, ensuring the delivery of high-quality homes that meet the needs of the people of County Clare.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires each planning authority to include the provisions of its Housing Strategy in its development plan. The Clare County Housing Strategy 2023-2029 sets out the strategy for addressing existing and future housing needs in Clare. This Housing Strategy is the mechanism adopted by the Council to ensure that the housing needs of the existing and future population of the County are provided for.

Development Plan Objective: Implementation of the Housing Strategy	
CDP5.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To secure the implementation and delivery of the Clare County Housing Strategy 2023-2029.

Through the implementation of the Core Strategy, the Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy, the Housing Strategy and the wider Development Plan the Council will seek to secure the provision of housing required for the existing and future population of the County. This assists in achieving balanced growth across the County where existing towns and villages grow at a rate proportionate to their places within the Settlement Hierarchy. The land use zonings as set out in the settlement plans in Volume 3 of this Plan, are based on the overarching principles of this Development Plan and set the framework and rationale for the amount and location of zonings for residential development throughout the County.

Development Plan Objective: Facilitating the Housing Needs of the Population	
CDP5.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate the housing needs of the existing and future population of County Clare through the management of housing development throughout the county in accordance with the Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy; b) To monitor and review the effectiveness of the Housing Strategy in meeting and resolving identified housing needs; and c) To prioritise the reuse of existing housing stock in the Plan area and the renovation and re-use of obsolete, vacant and derelict homes.

5.2.2 Living in our Towns and Villages

Active land management, sustainable compact growth, placemaking and climate change adaptation and mitigation are key objectives of both the NPF and the RSES. In order to create vibrant and sustainable towns and villages it is essential to sustain and enhance the residential population in town and village centres. Residential uses in the town centre, when combined with retail, commercial and civic uses, bring about high levels of human interaction and form an essential element of the vitality of a town. Residents in town and village centres enjoy a high quality of life and convenient access to both employment opportunities and a range of amenities. Residential uses in town and village centres also enhance economic growth by contributing to the vibrancy of settlements, making them more attractive locations for new business development and job creation. It is an aim of this development plan to encourage greater levels of residential occupancy in town and village centres across the County. In order to achieve this aim it is important to ensure that town and village centres are attractive, family-friendly places with a mix of accommodation types and tenures and to encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises in the town centres for residential accommodation.

Within the towns and villages across County Clare there are brownfield and infill site redevelopment opportunities. Subject to the site specific issues and adequate infrastructural capacity there is the potential to provide a greater mix of units and higher densities on these sites in order to achieve sustainable compact growth. In accordance with the National Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Height (2018) there may also be opportunities for taller building heights in order to promote a more efficient use of available and accessible lands. Issues relating to active travel and the achievement of appropriate permeability within new developments and existing settlements are further outlined in Sections 11.2.4 and 11.2.5 of this Plan.

The Council will use various mechanisms available to resolve issues of title including Compulsory Purchase Orders to resolve long standing vacancy/ dereliction issues in towns

and villages. However, the Council will prioritise working with the relevant landowner(s) and stakeholders on a partnership basis to resolve such issues.

Development Plan Objective: Living in our Towns and Villages	
CDP5.3	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To encourage the reuse of upper floors above commercial premises for residential accommodation; b) To promote the retention of town centre residential units and to discourage their subdivision into smaller units or conversion into non-residential uses; c) To encourage the development of new residential accommodation in or adjoining town centres and to ensure that such developments provide a range of accommodation types and tenures and a high level of residential amenity; d) To support the procurement of vacant town centre residential property by Clare County Council to ensure its continued use for residential purposes into the future; and e) To support opportunities for the delivery of serviced sites for housing within towns and villages.

Development Plan Objective: Use of Public Lands	
CDP5.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work with the National Land Agency, other public bodies and capital spending departments and agencies to co-ordinate and secure the best use of lands in public ownership; and b) To promote the renewal of underutilised strategic areas to assist in the effective regeneration of places identified as being most in need.

5.2.3 Social and Affordable Housing

Social Housing is defined as rented housing provided either by the local authority or a voluntary or co-operative housing body. Affordable Housing is defined as owner-occupier or shared ownership housing, provided at a price below market value. Table 4 of the County Housing Strategy and Housing Need Demand Assessment 2023-2029 (Volume 8) provides a quantitative overview of the social and affordable housing requirements in County Clare over the Plan period and demonstrates the number of units required to accommodate the households experiencing mortgage qualification and rental affordability issues.

In line with the objectives of both the NPF and the RSES the provision of appropriate social and affordable housing in town and village centres through the renovation of existing housing stock or brownfield/infill site redevelopment can make a significant contribution to

settlement renewal, compact growth and the increased sustainability of settlements in Clare. Clare County Council will promote the conversion of vacant properties into new social and affordable homes through schemes including the Repair and Leasing Scheme, the Buy and Renew Scheme, and long-term leasing, and will encourage owners of vacant properties to avail of these schemes. In instances where the local authority is developing social or affordable housing, or purchasing property for such uses, it is essential to ensure that all members of society have access to accommodation that is suitable for their needs.

The Urban Housing and Regeneration Act 2015 made amendments to Part V the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Section 94 of the Planning and Development Act now provides that a specified percentage, not being more than 10% of land zoned for residential use, or for a mixture of residential and other uses, shall be reserved for the provision of social and affordable housing. Compliance with the requirements of Part V of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) will be achieved in accordance with Section 96 of that Act, which was also amended by the Affordable Housing Act 2021. Any subsequent amendments to the legal requirement to deliver this housing during the lifetime of this Plan will also be complied with.

Development Plan Objective: Social and Affordable Housing	
CDP5.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To require lands in respect of which permission for the development of houses is granted to comply with the Affordable Housing Act 2021 and Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), or any amendment thereof. The Council reserves the right to determine the appropriateness of 'Part V' Cost Rental and/or affordable purchase delivery on individual sites on a case-by-case basis. b) To acquire land/properties for social and affordable housing provision in advance of immediate requirements in order to be in a position to respond to housing supply and demand opportunities; c) To support and encourage the use of existing housing stock, brownfield and infill sites, in close proximity to services in towns and villages, for social and affordable housing provision; d) To ensure that new social and affordable housing developments are closely integrated into the structure of existing settlements and are not isolated from services or segregated from the surrounding community; e) To ensure that new social and affordable housing developments are designed and constructed on the principles of universal design and life-long adaptability; f) To support the work of voluntary and cooperative housing associations in County Clare;

	g) To ensure that there is a balanced supply of private, social and affordable housing such that no settlement in the County experiences an over-concentration of any one type of accommodation.
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5.2.4 Emergency Accommodation

For a variety of reasons, people may need safe emergency accommodation and Clare County Council has an important role to play in the provision of such facilities. The Council's Clare Homeless Action Team provide support and advice to people who are homeless, or who are at risk of homelessness. Where appropriate, following an assessment of needs, assistance can be given with emergency accommodation. It is recognised that those who are in need of emergency accommodation may require long-term social housing in the future and the Council will work to meet both the short and long-term housing needs of all residents of the County.

Development Plan Objective: Emergency Accommodation	
CDP5.6	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support the work of the Clare Homeless Action Team and ensure that assistance is provided to those who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness in the County; b) To work with all relevant stakeholders to implement Housing for All: A new Housing Plan for Ireland within the County.

5.2.5 Unfinished Developments and Taking in Charge

Taking in charge means that the roads within a development become public roads under Section 11 of the Roads Act 1993 upon completion of a development scheme. Where an order is made under this Section, the Council also takes in charge:

- Any sewers, watermains or service connections within the attendant grounds of the development. Where potable water and foul water infrastructure has been vested in the ownership of Uisce Eireann through a Connection Agreement, there is no requirement for the Council to take such infrastructure in charge;
- Public open spaces or public car parking spaces within the attendant grounds of the development,
- Public footpaths, and
- Street Lighting.

The Council has made significant progress in addressing the issue of unfinished housing developments in the County and will continue to monitor the progress of developments under construction to ensure compliance with the conditions of the relevant planning permissions.

There are numerous residential developments in County Clare that, while completed and occupied, have not yet been taken in charge by Clare County Council. The Council will continue to work with residents, developers and all relevant stakeholders to secure the satisfactory completion of all developments in the County and to ensure that residential developments are taken in charge in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Council’s ‘Taking in Charge Policy for Private Housing Developments’ (2019) (or as updated/superseded).

Development Plan Objective: Unfinished Developments and Taking in Charge	
CDP5.7	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to secure the satisfactory completion of unfinished developments in the County in accordance with Managing and Resolving Unfinished Housing Developments (DoECLG 2011); and b) To work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that residential developments are taken in charge in accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the Council’s Taking in Charge Policy for Private Housing Developments 2009 and any subsequent policy.

5.2.6 Housing Design, Mix and Tenure

The mix of house types proposed in an area must ensure that the needs of all members of society are accommodated. A mix of house types and tenures will create mixed communities and provide a choice of housing suitable to all age groups and persons at different stages of the life cycle.

In terms of house design the Council will require a variety of designs in each new development. The Council will also require development proposals to incorporate a mix of house types such as bungalows, two storey dwellings, duplexes and so on, as appropriate to the scale of the settlement in which the development will be located. A variety of plot sizes and shapes will be required within each development, providing future residents with the option of greater/less private open space associated with their property in accordance with their personal needs.

Development Plan Objective: Housing Mix	
CDP5.8	It is an objective of the Development Plan: a) To secure the development of a mix of house types and sizes throughout the County to meet the needs of the likely future population in accordance with the guidance set out in the Housing Strategy, Housing Need Demand Assessment

	<p>(HNDA) and the Guidelines on Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas and any subsequent guidelines;</p> <p>(b) To require new housing developments to incorporate a variety of plot sizes to meet the current and future needs of residents; and</p> <p>(c) To require the submission of a Statement of Housing Mix with all applications for multi-unit residential developments in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal relative to this objective.</p>
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5.2.7 Ancillary Living Accommodation

Ancillary accommodation refers to the provision of an ancillary living accommodation unit at an existing occupied residential property. It is recognised that there may be circumstances other than age (e.g illness, disability) where a close relative may need to live close to their family for support but still enjoy some degree of independence.

For a new structure, a physical connection to the main house with direct access to the main dwelling is desirable but not a requirement. The conversion of an existing detached garage to create accommodation for a family member in need of accommodation can be considered.

Development Plan Objective: Ancillary Living Accommodation	
CDP5.9	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <p>To facilitate the provision of Ancillary Living Accommodation (ALA) in appropriate locations where the proposal can clearly demonstrate that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The proposed ALA shall be located within the immediate curtilage of an existing occupied residential property; b) The existing property or ALA is to remain the primary residence of the site folio owner; c) It takes cognisance of the current Housing Crisis (Demand); d) There is a bona-fide need for such an ancillary unit; e) The proposal does not impact adversely on either the residential amenities of the existing property or the residential amenities of the area; <p>All applications for such units shall comply with the criteria set out in Section 5.2.8 below.</p>

5.2.8 Ancillary Living Criteria

It will be a requirement that all applications for Ancillary Living Units shall comply with the following criteria:

- The unit shall be modest in size and consist of no more than a combined kitchen/dining/living room, a bathroom and contain no more than two bedrooms. The unit shall not exceed a gross floor area of 100sq.m;
- If the site is not connected to public mains, it must be demonstrated that the existing wastewater treatment system on site is capable of taking any additional loading associated with the unit. Details of any required upgrades shall be submitted as part of the development management process;
- Provision for a shared vehicular entrance only will be considered and no subdivision of the garden or entrance shall be permitted;
- The extension/unit shall remain in the same ownership as that of the existing dwelling on site. In this regard, the unit shall not be sold or otherwise legally transferred, other than as part of the overall property;
- Use of the unit will be restricted from sale or short-term letting separate to the main dwelling house.

5.2.9 Sites for Independent Development

Sites for independent development allow applicants to design and build their own homes tailored to their specific needs within the towns and villages of the County and provide an alternative to single houses in rural areas. These sites provide opportunities for compact growth, placemaking and the development of housing in close proximity to amenities and services. Housing developments of this nature also have the potential to increase the number of people living in towns and villages across the County. The Council will require development proposals for sites for independent development housing schemes to be accompanied by a detailed design brief setting out the parameters for architectural form, plot ratios, external finishes and boundary treatments.

In such developments infrastructure such as roads, lighting, water connectivity and other services will be developed by the primary developer, with house design and development, wastewater treatment (in areas without public wastewater treatment services) and on-site landscaping being carried out by the individual site purchasers. It is essential that such developments include adequate connectivity and are fully integrated into existing towns and villages and reflect the character of the surrounding settlement. In rural settlements in particular it is important to ensure that new houses constructed as part of a scheme of this nature are sympathetic in their design and do not result in the creation of a suburban-style environment in a primarily rural area.

Clare County Council will prepare guidance on the preparation of housing schemes comprising sites for independent development within the lifetime of this Plan. This guidance will address issues such as placemaking, the integration of the development into the existing settlement,

the potential order of work and the preparation of an overall masterplan for the site to ensure that the development is fully completed to a satisfactory standard.

Development Plan Objective: Sites for Independent Development	
CDP5.9	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <p>a) To support the development of housing schemes of ‘sites for independent development’ in the settlements of County Clare on lands that have been zoned for residential or low density residential development or sites that have been designated as Village Growth Areas;</p> <p>b) To prepare a guidance document on the preparation of housing schemes of ‘sites for independent development’ during the lifetime of this Plan.</p>

5.2.10 Traveller Accommodation

Clare County Council recognise the specific requirements of providing accommodation for the Traveller community. It also recognises its role in empowering and facilitating the travelling community so that it can provide for its own accommodation to a greater degree.

Under the Housing Acts 1966-1997 Local Authorities are responsible for the provision of accommodation, including serviced caravan sites, for the travelling community. The Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act (1998) places a statutory obligation on Clare County Council to prepare and adopt a Traveller Accommodation Programme, subject to periodic review, which meets the existing and projected needs of the Traveller community in the County. The current programme is the Clare County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024. Clare County Council has provided housing for Traveller communities in Ennis, Ennistymon and Shannon.

Development Plan Objective: Traveller Accommodation	
CDP5.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To provide appropriate housing accommodation for the Traveller Community in accordance with the Clare County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024, and any subsequent programme adopted by the Council.</p>

5.2.11 Housing and Accommodation for an Ageing Population

The ageing of Ireland is recognised in the 2020 Programme for Government as one of the most significant societal developments the Country will encounter in the coming decades. According to the most recent Central Statistics Office (CSO Population 2017-2051) population projections, trends indicate that the number of people over the age of 65 is expected to reach up to 1.6 million by 2051, more than double the population in that age cohort in 2016. Age

Friendly Principles and Guidelines for the Planning Authority, June 2021 sets out to ensure integration of age friendly principles into the development plan and regard is had to these guidelines in the objectives of this Plan. In addition, with the Town Centre First principle our town and village centres will become age friendly and will progress towards universal design.

Older people have certain housing requirements relating to access, medical care, security and personal safety, amongst other issues. While the majority of older people own their own homes, some may find that their accommodation is not entirely suitable to their needs. The demographic profile of County Clare demonstrates that the number of older people as a percentage of the overall population is increasing. This changing profile which is part of a long term trend requires the further provision of assisted housing which is suitable to the needs of older people.

Day care and nursing home facilities will become increasingly important in the coming years and Clare County Council will facilitate the development of quality services throughout the County. It is important that, wherever possible, these facilities are integrated into the community and towns and villages to allow residents to access goods and services outside the facility and to ensure convenient access for visitors, staff and servicing vehicles.

In addition to the provision of assisted housing, it is highly important to recognise that many older people wish to live in their own homes for as long as possible. For this reason it is important to ensure that new developments provide accessible and adaptable homes so that residents can continue to live independently in their own community, if they so wish, through all stages of their life. The Mobility Aid Grant and the Housing Aid for Older People Grant operated by the Council also assist in the retrofitting of houses with mobility aids and the carrying out of essential repairs so that older people can continue to live in their own homes.

Older members of the community, particularly those currently living in rural areas, can also experience social isolation and difficulties in accessing essential services. They can benefit from moving to towns and villages where they are close to services and social opportunities. Housing for older people in such locations also supports the Council’s objectives of compact growth and greater residential uses in town and village centres.

Development Plan Objective: Lifelong Housing	
CDP5.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To ensure that new housing developments are attractive, safe and provide a range of house types and that accessibility and lifetime adaptability that can accommodate the changing needs of a household over time are key elements in house design;</p> <p>b) To provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of older people and to encourage the provision of a range of housing options for</p>

	<p>older people in appropriate, convenient and easily accessible locations;</p> <p>c) To promote ‘aging in place’ opportunities for ‘downsizing’ or ‘right sizing’ within their community;</p> <p>d) To support the development of new nursing home and day care facilities in towns and villages in the County;</p> <p>e) To support nursing home and day care facilities on brownfield sites outside of settlements, subject to normal site suitability criteria; and</p> <p>f) To proactively support the implementation of the Smart Ageing and National Positive Ageing policies, the An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy and the Clare Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022.</p>
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5.2.12 Housing for People with Disabilities

An aim of all new housing and, wherever possible, housing conversions and refurbishments should be to construct homes that are universally designed and easily adapted to meet the changing needs of occupants over time. This will provide everyone with greater choice in terms of where they live, and will enable people to continue to live in their own homes for as long as possible as their needs change.

The Clare County Strategic Plan for Housing People with Disabilities (2018) provides a framework for social housing provision for people with disabilities in County Clare and for interagency co-operation in delivering appropriate housing. Its vision, which is based on the National Housing Strategy for People with a Disability 2011-2016 is to facilitate access, for people with disabilities, to the appropriate range of housing and related support services, delivered in an integrated and sustainable manner, which promotes equality of opportunity, individual choice and independent living.

Effectively meeting the housing needs of people with disabilities requires a variety of approaches and responses. The Council recognises and supports other key areas including person-centred and specific design to meet an individual’s personal needs, circumstances and choice, and a person-centred service with accessible information provision and inter-agency cooperation.

The Council operates a number of grant schemes to assist the owners of private houses to adapt their homes to meet their changing needs during their lifetime such as the Housing Aid for Older People Scheme, Mobility Aids Housing Grant Scheme and the Housing Adaptation Grant for New Houses.

Development Plan Objective: Accommodation for People with Disabilities	
CDP5.12	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide and facilitate the provision of accommodation to meet the needs of those with disabilities through the provision and/or adaptation of appropriate accommodation and through the promotion of lifetime adaptable homes; b) To require all new residential buildings to provide a ground floor, low-level-access shower and toilet to ensure adaptability to future needs; and c) To support housing options for older people and persons with disabilities in line with current and future national policies and plans including Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness.

5.2.13 Student Accommodation

Purpose-built student accommodation has particular requirements in terms of design and location. It should be located so that it has convenient access to universities and colleges, particularly by foot, bicycle and public transport and generally be within urban or suburban centres or within college campuses. Such developments are generally relatively high-density projects with a range of facilities appropriate for student living.

Development Plan Objective: Student Accommodation	
CDP5.13	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate the provision of high quality student accommodation in appropriate locations having regard to relevant guidance in relation to residential development; and b) To encourage new student accommodation to locate in areas where smarter travel transport options are available.

5.2.14 Holiday Homes

Holiday homes form an important part of the tourism infrastructure in County Clare and make a valuable contribution to the local economy particularly in the coastal areas of North and West Clare. However, large numbers of holiday homes in an area can also have negative impacts in terms of high numbers of vacant dwellings in the low season and, in some cases, associated issues with poor property maintenance during those times of vacancy. High levels of holiday home development can also have an affect on the provision of services and planning for future population growth. In County Clare settlements such as Kilkee, Liscannor, Querrin, Mountshannon and Carrigaholt have the highest seasonal vacancy rates. The provision and distribution of holiday homes in settlements throughout the County, particularly along the Atlantic Coast will be carefully monitored. The development

management process will ensure that the overall vision of sustainable communities is achieved.

Development Plan Objective: Holiday Homes	
CDP5.14	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To permit holiday homes in settlements where the developments are of a scale and at a location which contribute to sustainable communities, while ensuring an appropriate balance between the number of permanent homes and holiday homes; b) In settlements where an overconcentration of holiday homes has been identified, namely Ballyvaughan, Bellharbour, Bunratty, Carrigaholt, Doolin, Doonbeg, Fanore, Kilkee, Lahinch, Liscannor, Mountshannon, Querrin and Spanish Point to permit new residential development for permanent occupancy only; c) In the settlements of Ballyvaughan, Bellharbour, Bunratty, Carrigaholt, Doolin, Doonbeg, Fanore, Kilkee, Lahinch, Liscannor, Mountshannon, Querrin and Spanish Point to support and facilitate the conversion of some holiday home units to permanent homes or appropriate uses where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) It can be demonstrated that both the dwellings and the associated infrastructure (open space provision, car parking, wastewater capacity etc.) are of a sufficient standard to support the proposed new use; and ii) The Planning Authority is satisfied that the conversion will not have a negative impact on the tourism product in the area.

5.2.15 Naming of Developments

It is important that place names in new developments such as housing developments, streets, business centres etc. and their associated signage reflect the local topography, history, culture or ecology, such as ancient fields, roads, people and significant events. The Clare Place Names Committee gives advice on selecting place names and monitors new names given to developments. Bi-lingual signage within housing developments is required and the applicant/developer should ensure that the chosen place name for a new residential development is appropriate relative to its location, and should avoid names already in use within the County.

Development Plan Objective: Naming of Developments	
CDP5.15	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To promote local heritage by encouraging the use of local placenames or geographical, historical or cultural names in the naming of new residential or other developments.

5.2.16 Green Infrastructure within Residential Developments

In many cases the ‘greening’ of residential areas focuses on the requirement to provide a percentage of open space, back gardens/balconies, privacy strips and street planting. Quantity can often take precedence over ecological quality and function. Levelled areas of grassland provide ease of maintenance but have limited eco-system benefits. Open spaces in residential developments can be enriched by retaining and enhancing existing natural features as well as introducing additional features. New developments will be required to ensure that quality takes precedence through the incorporation of eco-system benefits alongside established features e.g. the retention of existing and/or the provision of new edges rich in biodiversity such as treelines, hedgerows, wetland areas or meadow planting which can be provided in conjunction with recreational amenity facilities. Regard should be had to the adopted County Clare Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2023 and County Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023, and their future iterations, in the design of green areas in residential developments.

Development Plan Objective: Green Infrastructure in Residential Developments	
CDP5.16	It is an objective of the Development Plan: a) To ensure that green areas associated with new residential developments enrich the quality of life of local residents and provide ecologically-rich areas that enhance biodiversity and contribute to the green infrastructure network in the County; and b) To facilitate and encourage community stakeholders to repurpose underutilised pockets within existing residential areas for the enhancement of biodiversity and green infrastructure.

5.2.17 Radon

Radon levels in the County have been collated from the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland. The central portion of the County is above reference level and therefore within a high radon area. A High Radon Area is any area where it is predicted that 10% or more of homes will exceed the Reference Level of 200 Bq/m³. Actions are required to reduce the risk to health from high radon levels in particular, within this central location.



Development Plan Objective: Radon	
CDP5.17	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To have regard to the specific guidance on radon prevention measures for new homes as contained within the existing Building Regulations (including any updated/superseding regulations that may be published within the lifetime of this Plan).

Chapter 6 Economic Development and Enterprise

Goal VI: A County Clare in which jobs and people are brought together and where the sustainable growth of employment, indigenous enterprise and economic activity is pursued proactively across all economic sectors throughout the County.

Chapter 6 Table of Contents

6.0	Introduction
6.1	Strategic Aims
6.2	Economic Development and Enterprise
6.3	Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West
6.4	Clare Local Economic and Community Plan
6.5	Atlantic Economic Corridor
6.6	Economic Development in Ennis
6.7	Economic Development in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area.
6.8	University of Limerick – Clare Campus
6.8.1	South Clare / University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone
6.9	Higher Education Institutes, the Knowledge Economy and Access to Talent
6.10	Shannon Estuary
6.11	Moneypoint Power Station
6.12	Research and Innovation
6.13	Clare Digital Hub Network
6.14	Sustainable Design and Working Environments
6.15	Availability of Land and Infrastructure
6.16	Brownfield and Infill Sites
6.17	Ancillary Services
6.18	Energy
6.19	Green Technology and the Circular Economy
6.20	Agricultural Development
6.21	Rural Enterprise
6.22	The Food Industry
6.23	Craft/Creative Industries
6.24	Home-Based Economic Activity and Remote Working
6.25	The Film Industry
6.26	Retail Developments
6.27	Tourism Developments
6.28	Data Centres

6.0 Introduction

County Clare is a strategic location for enterprise, innovation and investment. It benefits from a high-quality workforce and is an attractive place to live, work and do business. Clare County Council recognises the pivotal role of economic development and enterprise within the County. Together with its Local Enterprise Office, the Clare Economic Taskforce and relevant stakeholders the Council will build on the economic strengths within the County and Region, will proactively pursue further economic development opportunities, will facilitate conditions that foster enterprise and enhanced resilience to economic vulnerabilities and that attract and retain high quality jobs that will allow for better standards of living.

There are a range of new economic issues facing County Clare that were not apparent in previous County Development Plans and these have given rise to uncertainty in recent years. These issues include the challenges posed by Brexit and the Covid 19 pandemic, and both the challenges and opportunities arising from carbon emission targets and changes in work practices and particularly remote working or working in hubs. As a direct result of the Covid 19 pandemic Ireland moved from being one of the fastest growing economies in Europe with near full employment to an unemployment rate of in excess of 20%¹. The Three Regional Assemblies of Ireland commissioned a *Covid-19 Regional Economic Analysis* in 2020 which demonstrated that County Clare has significant exposure to economic disruption caused by the pandemic. Analysis of the exposure levels across the County indicates that settlements such as Bunratty, Lahinch, Liscannor and Kilkee and other settlements which have a high dependency on the tourism industry have the greatest exposure.

Clare County Council is fully committed to assisting in tackling such challenges and a primary aim of this *County Development Plan 2023-2029* is to positively and proactively encourage sustainable economic and enterprise development. In particular, it aims to promote flexible policies and objectives which are responsive to economic change, opportunities for job creation, investment, advances in technology and changing work practices. To ensure that County Clare maximises its capacity to deliver on its population and growth allocations, the objectives of the Plan align with the *NPF*, the *RSES*, the *LSMATS* and the planned infrastructure delivery in the County.

6.1 Strategic Aims

The Development Plan sets out an economic strategy to achieve greater prosperity in all areas of the County. This strategy, which is in accordance with the overall vision for the County is based on the following strategic aims:

- To ensure that the benefits of economic growth and prosperity are spread to all parts of the County;
- To maximise the return from the economic assets of the County including Ennis, the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, Shannon International Airport, University of Limerick – Clare Campus, the Shannon Estuary, the proposed South Clare/University of

¹ CSO Unemployment figure Oct 2020

Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone, County Clare’s rural and tourist attractions and access to talent;

- To ensure that Ennis and Shannon continue to develop as drivers of economic growth in County Clare and the Southern Region;
- To proactively implement the economic element of the adopted *Clare Local Economic and Community Plan*;
- To maintain and promote County Clare’s broad economic and employment base;
- To encourage, support and facilitate enterprise development at appropriate locations throughout the County;
- To encourage, support and facilitate research, technology development and innovation as well as start-up business with high potential;
- To maintain, adapt and promote the industrial areas in Shannon as a driver of economic and industrial growth throughout the Region;
- To facilitate the diversification of the County’s rural economy and work practices and to encourage cottage industry and micro-enterprise; and
- To support where appropriate the further establishment of digital hubs across the County which facilitate enterprises and local communities by accommodating e-working, small-scale training and conferencing.

6.2 Economic Development and Enterprise

The Regional Economic Strategy as set out in the RSES is based on the following economic Principles:

- **Smart Specialisation**
Smart Specialisation brings together key stakeholders to identify the competitive advantages of an area with the view of developing economic opportunities.
- **Clustering**
Clusters are a geographic or virtual concentration of interrelated companies, suppliers, and associated institutions. Fostering modern cluster policies is a strong feature of the Region’s economic strategy.
- **Placemaking for enterprise development**
Placemaking policy is instrumental to ensuring that sufficient human capital and talent is captured.
- **Knowledge Diffusion**
“Knowledge diffusion” is the spreading of knowledge - the process of knowledge transfer to different segments of society to develop a region’s human capital.
- **Capacity Building**
An inherent part of the economic strategy is the building of capacity to enable effective implementation and to respond to emerging challenges.

These principles are supported and inform the Economic Strategy as set out in this Plan.



Figure 1: Economic Principles (RSES for the Southern Region)

A shared vision and proactive planning will help to coordinate infrastructural investment with economic growth, making the County an attractive location for the expansion of existing enterprise and for new business development.

Economic development requires the promotion of County Clare in a national, European and global economy and the marketing of the resources and opportunities that County Clare has to offer. Clare County Council will work in collaboration with other agencies and stakeholders to actively promote and encourage economic development and enterprise development in the County.

Indigenous enterprises are also highly important to the County, providing jobs in both urban and rural locations and supporting the local, regional and national economy. Clare County Council and its Local Enterprise Office will work on an on-going basis to foster entrepreneurship and provide support for small and medium businesses.

It is important that enterprise development and economic growth occur in all parts of the County. This will ensure that each settlement in the County achieves its economic potential and that there is balanced and sustainable growth across County Clare. Where appropriate, Clare County Council will promote the integration of employment uses with other land uses, including residential, tourism and retail uses, in order to provide mixed use developments in the interest of sustainable planning.

Clare County Council launched a new initiative in April 2021 aimed at mapping the talent and skills of those living and working in Clare. The Skills Map is designed to add value to Clare's economy, create new jobs and stimulate economic growth. It connects residents to employers hiring remotely or on-location and helps local government identify the skills and talent needed for County Clare to grow and prosper.

Development Plan Objective: Economic Development and Enterprise	
CDP6.1	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), Clare:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work in partnership with development agencies such as Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland, adjoining local authorities, the Southern Regional Assembly and all other relevant agencies to proactively pursue enterprise and sustainable economic development in line with the policies and objectives as set out in national, regional and local strategies; b) To co-operate with local and national development agencies and engage with existing and future employers in order to maximise job opportunities in the County including the transition of talent from declining industries to more competitive sectors through the promotion of Labour Activation Programmes and market reactivation emergency funds; c) To support start-up businesses and small-scale industrial enterprise at appropriate locations throughout the County, subject to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development; d) To sustainably develop, deepen and enhance the economic resilience of County Clare by facilitating the widening of our economic sectors, boosting innovation, export diversification, productivity enhancement and access to new markets; e) To give favourable consideration to locating appropriate employment where it would address unemployment blackspots, support sectoral and location-based strengths and synergies with existing employers, and take advantage of 'ready to go' property solutions and local ambition; f) To support the development of innovation hubs and centres of excellence (with particular opportunities for innovation in areas such as agri-food, agri-tech, marine research, creative industries and the knowledge economy) as local drivers for growth; g) To support the Southern Regional Assembly in the development of contingency plans and pilot projects to counteract the effects of industrial decline and potential

	<p>external shocks in the Region including lifelong learning programmes, appropriate business supports and up skilling to facilitate moving to employment in alternative sectors in the locality or region; and</p> <p>h) To facilitate the further development of a diverse base of smart economic specialisms within the County including innovation and diversification in agriculture (Agri-Tech, Food and Beverage), the Marine (Ports, Fisheries and the wider Blue Economy potential), Forestry, Peatlands, Renewable Energy, Tourism (leverage the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands corridors), Social Enterprise, Circular Economy, Knowledge Economy, Global Business Services, Fin-Tech, Specialised Engineering, Heritage, Arts and Culture and the Design and Craft Industries as dynamic divers for the rural economy.</p>
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6.3 Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West

The *Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West* is future-focused and centred around a number of priorities including:

- to enable innovation across the region,
- to contribute to the region’s ambition to lead on sustainability and low carbon,
- to create a balanced region, where both urban and rural communities can work together,
- growing new and existing small business, and
- assisting enterprise growth in more rural areas and areas of high unemployment.

The plan complements and builds on the existing activities being undertaken by the Enterprise Agencies, the LEOs and the wider range of State Bodies directly involved in supporting enterprise development and is supported by the Regional Enterprise Development Fund (REDF). A number of ambitious enterprise development projects have been supported by the REDF which will be significant catalysts and economic drivers for the region including the Future Mobility Campus Ireland for the connected autonomous vehicle test bed in Shannon and Clare Maritime Enterprise Zone- Kilrush Marine Training Centre. The Plan identifies key actions which will contribute further to the development of the Region, these include:

- Creation of a sustainable Regional Film Industry in the Mid-West,
- Progress regional data centre projects with an emphasis on innovation and sustainability,
- Innovation in education – inclusive, immersive, enterprise focused education programs, the Atlantic Green Digital Basin – decarbonising industry by developing the Shannon Estuary as a renewable energy hub,
- Build regional research, education and training capacity for emerging renewable energy opportunities,
- Create an efficient and sustainable regional network of enterprise centres and remote working eHubs,

- Establish a world class Marine, Renewable, Science and Climate Change Centre in Kilrush.

New funding of up to €180m will be made available for the development and implementation of collaborative and innovative enterprise projects that can make a significant impact on enterprise development in the regions. Clare County Council and the Local Enterprise Office (LEO) Clare will continue to work with the relevant stakeholders to build on this success, to proactively progress the delivery of the actions set out in the Regional Enterprise Plan and to seek further job creation in various sectors including manufacturing, tourism, med-tech, aviation and aerospace, food and beverage, and sports and design, where there is real potential for job creation.

Development Plan Objective: Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West	
CDP6.2	It is an objective of Clare County Council and LEO Clare: To collaborate with all relevant stakeholders in proactively progressing the delivery of the actions set out in the <i>Regional Enterprise Plan to 2024 for the Mid-West</i> (or any updated/superseding plan).

6.4 Clare Local Economic and Community Plan

The preparation of a *Local Economic and Community Plan* (LECP) by all local authorities is provided for in the statutory Local Government Reform Act 2014. This Act requires that a six-year plan be adopted by Clare County Council, setting out high level goals, objectives and actions required to promote and support local economic and community development within the County. The *LECP* must include two elements:

- A local economic element; and
- A community development element.

The County Development Plan informs the content of the *LECP*, and the content of the *LECP* must be consistent with the Development Plan. In this regard, both Plans are interdependent in setting out the strategic vision for the economic growth of the County and are accompanied by supporting policies and objectives to be employed in securing this vision. In particular the *LECP* must be consistent with the Core Strategy and objectives of this Plan and of the *RSES*. It is a Strategic Aim of the Development Plan to proactively implement the economic element of the adopted *Clare Local Economic and Community Plan*.

6.5 Atlantic Economic Corridor

The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) is the term applied to a non-administrative or ‘linear’ area along the Western seaboard, stretching from Kerry to Donegal including County Clare. The AEC aims to build and increase collaboration within the area that maximises its assets, attracts investment and creates jobs and prosperity in the Region. The Council will work with the relevant stakeholders in the delivery of the potential of the AEC for the County.

Development Plan Objective: Atlantic Economic Corridor	
CDP6.3	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the development of the AEC initiative as a driver of enterprise, growth, investment and the attraction of entrepreneurial skills and talent along the Western Seaboard, and to work with key stakeholders including adjoining local authorities to optimise the combined advantages and opportunities of the AEC including delivering a high-value and low-carbon economy.

6.6 Economic Development in Ennis

Ennis is designated as a ‘Key Town’ in the RSES, and as the County Town for Clare is an important residential, service and commercial centre which provides significant levels of employment. It is the administrative capital of County Clare, is home to international industries and indigenous companies, and is central to the economic and enterprise development of the county. Potential exists to further expand the employment base in the town, building a resilient and dynamic local economy. *Ennis 2040 – Economic and Spatial Strategy* is a long-term strategy for the sustainable development of this ‘Key Town’ and addresses the measures required to manage economic, infrastructural, environmental and physical challenges. Volume 3 of this Plan contains a settlement plan for Ennis town which identifies lands for potential enterprise and industrial development. A detailed local area plan setting out further initiatives for economic development in Ennis and its environs will be prepared during the lifetime of this Development Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Economic Development in Ennis	
CDP6.4	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To facilitate the implementation of <i>Ennis 2040</i> in order to set the long-term economic strategy for Ennis with an agreed focus on its economic future and spatial development to 2040 and beyond in line with the requirements of the associated SEA Environmental Report, the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report together with the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment; b) To support the future development of the ‘Key Town’ of Ennis as a self-sustaining, regional economic driver and as a key location of choice for investment in the Region; c) To support a future development of Ennis which capitalises on its strategic location relative to Limerick and Galway Cities and Shannon International Airport, as well as its role as a centre of employment and economic activity within the Region;

	<p>d) To support the creation of a strong and diverse employment base, that capitalises upon the strengths of Ennis and its environs;</p> <p>e) To facilitate the higher education growth potential of Ennis and its vision of becoming a centre for lifelong learning; and</p> <p>f) To ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of Objective CDP3.3.</p>
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6.7 Economic Development in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

Shannon is an established centre of both foreign direct investment and indigenous enterprise. Industry and enterprise bases such as the Shannon Free Zone, Smithstown and Westpark Business Campus accommodate companies that make a significant contribution to the national economy each year. Lands are zoned in the *Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan* for future employment-generating development, including a substantial land bank in proximity to Shannon International Airport. The Council will protect and promote Shannon as an attractive location for industrial/enterprise development.

Development Plan Objective: Development of Shannon	
CDP6.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To protect and promote Shannon as a significant regional asset and an employment centre in the Limerick-Shannon MASP and as a primary location for industrial, manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and transport operating centres, and to facilitate, where required, the adaptation of industrial areas to new employment generators;</p> <p>b) To facilitate the continued development of the Aviation cluster at Shannon as recognised in Ireland’s <i>National Aviation Policy</i>;</p> <p>c) To support the redevelopment and renewal of enterprise and industrial units in the Shannon Area, in particular works to enhance the energy efficiency of the buildings and the physical appearance of the existing business park/industrial zones in the Town;</p> <p>d) To support opportunities for the expansion of Shannon as a globally recognised centre of excellence for software engineering/aviation/logistics MedTech, engineering and ICT;</p> <p>e) To support the development of Shannon as a centre for unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) or drones building on the establishment of Ireland’s first air taxi service in the town;</p>

	<p>f) To support the development of Shannon as a centre for research and development in Autonomous Connected Electric Shared Vehicles (ACES), including Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV); and</p> <p>g) To ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of Objective CDP3.3.</p>
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Shannon International Airport provides international connectivity and is a major asset, not only in the promotion of economic development in the Gateway, but also in the economy of the wider Mid-West and Southern Regions. The Shannon aviation cluster spans the industry value chain, encompassing everything from aircraft leasing, maintenance and recycling to component manufacture, parts repair and business aviation. The International Aviation Services Centre is essential to the further industrial and economic growth of Shannon and is strongly supported by Clare County Council.

The Airport is a gateway to Ireland’s premier tourist locations and offers full US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) pre-clearance facilities to airlines travelling to the USA. Clare County Council recognises Shannon International Airport as an enterprise and employment hub and the opportunities that it provides as an international gateway, together with the large number of global logistics companies located in close proximity and the availability of 24 hour unrestricted aircraft landing and take-off operations. Clare County Council will encourage and support the diversification of the Airport and the provision of increased cargo-services.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon International Airport	
See also Section 11.2.11 Shannon International Airport	
CDP6.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate the future development and expansion of Shannon International Airport and its continued role as a driver of economic, social and tourism growth in the Region whilst recognising the need to support actions to transition to a low carbon future;</p> <p>b) To facilitate the development of enhanced freight cargo facilities at Shannon International Airport;</p> <p>c) To facilitate the improvement/upgrade (as necessary) of key infrastructural resources within the Airport, to the airport lands, and to the N19 providing access to the area as well as improved sustainable transport links between Shannon International Airport, Limerick City Centre, the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest, the South Clare/UL Economic SDZ and the National Technology Park at Limerick;</p> <p>d) To support the development of initiatives that harness the potential of the Airport including, but not limited to, a residential flight school, unmanned aerospace systems (UAS)</p>

and a centre for space collaboration and research cooperation; and

e) To support and facilitate the development of renewable energy infrastructure within the airport and its confines, thereby enhancing energy security, including development of facilities in support of the aviation sector’s transition to Sustainable/Renewable Aviation Fuel and energy;

f) To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation as outlined in Objective CDP3.3.

6.8 University of Limerick – Clare Campus

The University of Limerick is a significant strategic asset in County Clare and is a critical driver of economic development and the fostering of an innovative, knowledge-based economy for the Clare, Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, and the Southern Region. The University, which caters for approximately 16,500 students, has developed significantly in recent years on the Clare side of the River Shannon, and now boasts three residential villages, Life Sciences, Health Sciences and the World Academy of Music and Dance buildings, a medical school, and the largest all-weather sports complex in Europe together with road and pedestrian bridges across the river. There is significant potential for the University to expand further northwards into County Clare within the designated University Zone. The University Zone can accommodate development and uses associated with higher education including research and development, student/campus accommodation, residential uses complementary to the uses contained within the existing University campus. It is intended to seek Strategic Development Zone status within this University Zone and undertake development of the zone within the lifetime of this plan.

6.8.1 South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone

The development of the University of Limerick - Clare Campus in County Clare has been a matter of strategic importance for Clare and the Mid-West for over 20 years, having first been identified for expansion in the *Clare County Development Plan 1999* and subsequently in the *Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines*. This plan zones lands as ‘University’ for the future development of the University of Limerick – Clare Campus in County Clare and identifies the site as a proposed Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). The zoning and its development as a plan led Economic SDZ is logical in the context of the previous expansion of the University across the River Shannon into County Clare in 2001, and the expansion to date resulting in 40% of the UL campus now being located in County Clare.

The *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* recognises the spatial and economic suitability of the site as an SDZ, identifying the site as a ‘Strategic Employment Location’ and including an objective “to support an application for the designation and subsequent development as an Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ), subject to the provisions of the Planning Act and all environmental considerations”. Moreover, the designation of the lands as an SDZ is identified as a ‘National Enabler’ in the *Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP)*.

The scale of the site at 110 hectares and its integrity as an entity dictates that the site is best master-planned and developed in a plan-led manner as an SDZ. With this designation, the site has the capacity to become a game changer both regionally and nationally. The designation of the combined site and the formal adoption of a planning scheme will greatly enhance the development opportunities for the site and facilitate orderly and planned development, as envisaged in the legislation. The designation of the lands as an Economic SDZ will enable the site to generate 3,500 jobs with additional employment being generated in the construction phase and subsequent spin-off developments. Foreign and indigenous industry will have the opportunity to partner with the University in investment, expansion, staff and student placement, research and career development.

Talent is key to attracting Foreign Direct Investment, and creating attractive places is key to attracting talent. The *South Clare / UL Economic SDZ* will be an environment with high quality placemaking providing for a full range of living, working, amenity, social, cultural, and recreational spaces integrated with a range of university facilities, including teaching, learning and research. It will be a model of sustainable urban living incorporating transport, education, and enterprise, building on the standards of the existing campus and functionally integrating with Limerick City and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan area. It will offer opportunities for collaboration in creating a world class living, learning, research and employment environment founded on high quality placemaking.

The Economic SDZ will facilitate the development by the University of Limerick of ‘Academies of Learning’ on the University campus in County Clare. These ‘Academies’ represent the most significant revision in the relationship between Higher Education and Enterprise. Academies will be developed in collaboration between UL and indigenous and FDI companies to build programmes of learning that link education, enterprise, employment and living seamlessly on the SDZ campus. Industry will inform and design UL higher education modules and provide the teaching and practice-based learning for these programmes alongside UL faculties to meet the specific needs of industry’s recruitment and research requirements. UL Students will participate in Enterprise and FDI located on the SDZ as part of both their undergraduate and postgraduate education, experiencing the excitement of innovation, invention, and evolution. Global industries will locate on the SDZ attracted by a plan-led scheme, certainty of infrastructure, with access to talent and on-campus research and development, which can only be provided within a university campus.

The Academies of Learning within the SDZ will become the ultimate fusion of UL’s practice of partnership. The SDZ will also give effect to IDA Ireland’s strategy, *Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth 2021-2024* which is based on five pillars - Growth, Transformation, Regions, Sustainability, and Impact. The Academies will establish Ireland and specifically the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as a ‘Treasury of Talent’ constituting a vital resource in attracting foreign direct investment. This will sustain both FDI and Indigenous Enterprise and the continued economic development of Ireland while establishing a European site of exemplar significance.

This economic resurgence will generate an additional population within the city and surrounding settlements in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area. The impact on Shannon

International Airport will be significant as the SDZ, which will be accessible from the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Route (LNDR), focuses on international partnerships with Europe through the European University Network.

A Planning Scheme for the proposed SDZ in the University Zone will be prepared providing for significant growth in areas of the University and its hinterland. The Planning Scheme will also facilitate the redevelopment and integration of the Errina Canal and its associated water-based developments into the SDZ by means of canal/riverside water-related uses. Uses appropriate to the development of the University Zone and SDZ include:

1. Educational facilities;
2. Academies of Learning, Research and Development;
3. Student residences and residential quarters complementary to the existing campus and uses proposed to be contained in the SDZ;
4. Student support facilities;
5. Commercial and mixed uses including enterprise/start-up business units/light industry uses linked to the proposed SDZ and the University's research and development role;
6. Sports, social recreation, riverside and water-related uses and amenity provision;
7. Healthcare services, other facilities and community facilities;
8. Green quarter/high amenity areas.

**Development Plan Objective:
University of Limerick - Clare Campus
Proposed Strategic Development Zone**

CDP6.7

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To secure the designation and subsequent development of the South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) on lands including those identified as the University Zone, in accordance with the objectives and provisions of this development plan subject to the provisions of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) and all environmental considerations;
- b) To support, promote and encourage the further expansion of the University of Limerick campus on the north side of the River Shannon, including hinterland development within the University Zone;
- c) To work closely with the University of Limerick in realising the vision for the Clare Campus as a world class learning, research and development hub through its development as a world-class centre for the localisation of globalised development;
- d) To ensure that the SDZ Planning Scheme optimises movement by sustainable transport modes through:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appropriate development layouts which allow for permeability (including filtered permeability for walking and cycling); • Provision of a comprehensive cycle network which is linked to the wider cycle networks in Limerick and Clare and is designed in accordance with the National Cycle Manual; • Provision and design of car-parking and cycle-parking in a manner that gives a distinct advantage to cycling and walking over car transport for trips within, to and from the SDZ site; • A commitment to comprehensive mobility management measures for all employment and education developments within the site; • New road infrastructure shall be designed in accordance with the requirements to meet Bus Connects; • The planning scheme shall incorporate a full public transport strategy for the development site which shall be formulated with input from key stakeholders. <p>e) The impact of the South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) on the national and strategic road network shall be fully assessed, and any mitigation measures shall be arrived at following engagement and input from key stakeholders including the TII and the NTA;</p> <p>f) To support and promote the future reopening of the Errina Canal as a piece of functioning waterway infrastructure facilitating water-borne access to the Clare Campus, and to support any development proposals the University may have to maximise its strategic position adjacent to the River Shannon, River Blackwater and Errina Canal, including the reinstatement of the riverside walkway;</p> <p>g) To implement innovative decarbonisation and green infrastructure measures in the SDZ in accordance with the European Green Deal and national policy and legislation.</p>
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Burlington Lands

The former Burlington Plant in Gillogue, which comprise approximately 29,000m² of floorspace, has significant potential for redevelopment and to contribute to economic growth in the South Clare area. The buildings have the potential for a wide variety of uses including light industry and enterprise uses, with possible linkages to adjoining land uses in the University and the proposed Strategic Development Zone. The site also has potential for indoor recreational uses. The site is currently accessed by the R-463 Regional Road which is a Strategic Regional Route. Access will be greatly enhanced by the construction of the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Road.

There are a number of settlement ponds to the south of the site associated with the former industrial uses on the site. The Council will work with the relevant stakeholders to ensure the on-going maintenance and eventual decommissioning and remediation of these settlement ponds.

Development Plan Objective: Burlington	
CDP6.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the optimal use and/or redevelopment of the former Burlington site and encourage appropriate new development in accordance with the zoning on the site; b) To facilitate the development of a pedestrian link from the Burlington site to the University of Limerick; and c) To ensure that all works on the site are in compliance with Objective CDP3.3 of this Plan.

6.9 Higher Education Institutes, the Knowledge Economy and Access to Talent

County Clare has a highly-skilled and well-educated workforce, making it an attractive location for new business development. The importance of the University of Limerick and the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest as well as other higher education institutes located in the Southern, and the Northern and Western Regions, is acknowledged and recognised as a critical driver of economic success. These institutes also play a key role in both retaining highly educated and qualified young people in the County and in recruiting and retaining a skilled workforce which is essential in terms of attracting economic investment and sustaining the vibrancy of local communities.

The sharing of knowledge and innovation between higher education institutes and the enterprise sector is critical to the promotion of a knowledge and innovation-based economy. This will be critical to the successful delivery and development of the proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone. With the availability of a high quality, international academic base a key economic focus of the County needs to be directed towards research and development-intensive and higher value-added products.

Development Plan Objective: Higher Education Institutes and the Knowledge Economy	
CDP6.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To foster and develop strategic links with industries/businesses and higher education institutes in order to provide an enhanced locally-based knowledge economy and in order to improve education, training and skills development in the workforce;

- b) To encourage research, technology, development and innovation in collaboration with higher education institutes and development agencies;
- c) To support the continued development of third level provision in County Clare including the expansion of existing facilities such as the NUIG Shannon College of Hotel Management at Shannon, the University of Limerick, and the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest campus' in Ennis as well as the development of new third level facilities.
- d) To support the higher education growth potential of Ennis town and its vision of becoming a centre for lifelong learning; and
- e) To encourage and facilitate start-up businesses with high growth potential.

6.10 Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary is a natural asset of international importance and offers significant potential for future economic development in County Clare and the Southern Region. It is a multi-functional zone, with the waters and adjoining lands supporting a range of functions, uses and activities and with environmental resources and assets which bring character, prosperity and vibrancy to the area. In recognition of the potential of the Estuary to capitalise on this natural advantage and the need to take a sustainable approach to future development in the area, a *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan* (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary has been prepared. The SIFP sets out an overall 30-year strategy for the proper sustainable growth, development and environmental management of the Shannon Estuary region. The *SIFP* identifies and zones two sites in County Clare for marine-related industry (Moneypoint and Cahiracon) and also identifies opportunity sites for other key activities such as renewable energy development and aquaculture. It also promotes the potential of the Estuary for tourism and recreational activities. The *SIFP* comprises Volume 9 of this Plan.

The *Developing Nature-Based Tourism Opportunities on the Shannon Estuary Way* seeks to make the Estuary a key tourist attraction for the Mid-West and to increase visitor dwell times and spend in the local communities along the 207km route and to achieve synergies with the Wild Atlantic Way. In addition, Clare County Council has collaborated with Shannon-Foynes Port Company and adjoining Local Authorities to form Cruise Shannon Estuary. Cruise Shannon Estuary is an initiative to sustainably grow the cruise and sustainable marine tourism industry and establish the Shannon Estuary and County Clare as one of the top destinations for cruise liners in Europe.

The ESB's *Brighter Future* strategy proposes the transformation of the Moneypoint site from a fossil fuel burning power generation station into a green energy hub under the 'Green Atlantic' project. Clare County Council supports this project and is committed to safeguarding the future operations and proposed development at Moneypoint while at the same time ensuring that the environmental integrity of the adjacent Shannon Estuary is maintained.

The proximity to Moneypoint, Shannon-Foynes Port and the Shannon Estuary to the Clare Maritime Economic Zone facility in Kilrush offers a unique opportunity for this training centre to be at the heart of the provision of maritime training to the offshore renewable energy industry off the West coast in the coming years.

The future development of the Shannon Estuary is outlined in detail in Chapter 12 of this Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon Estuary	
CDP6.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To proactively implement the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary including the mitigation measures identified in Volume 9 of this Plan; and</p> <p>b) To support the promotion, marketing and seeking of financial and expertise support for the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary</i> and specific projects emerging there from.</p>

6.11 Moneypoint Power Station

Moneypoint is one of Ireland’s largest electricity stations, located on the Shannon Estuary near Kilrush. It has a capacity to generate up to 915MW of electricity each year and is capable of meeting approximately 25% of Ireland’s demand for electricity. It is primarily fuelled by coal, brought ashore via the ESB’s deepwater port on the Shannon Estuary. The plant, when combined with Tarbert on the south shore, forms a significant industry and energy hub on the Estuary. Moneypoint is identified as a ‘Strategic Development Location’ in the *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary* and the lands are zoned for Marine-Related Industry.

Moneypoint Power Station makes a very significant contribution to the local economy and the facility continues to be strategically important regionally and nationally in terms of capacity, diversity and security of energy supply. In the interest of retaining employment in the West Clare area, Clare County Council will support the on-going diversification and expansion of the site and supports the ‘Green Atlantic’ project to transform the station from a fossil fuel burning power generation station into a green energy hub while also ensuring a Just Transition for all. See Development Plan Objective CDP12.6 ‘Strategic Development Location B– Moneypoint’ in Chapter 12 for further information and detailed objectives relating to Moneypoint.

6.12 Research and Innovation

Research and innovation are the cornerstones of modern economic growth. County Clare’s strong industrial base and close affiliations with the University of Limerick, the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest and numerous other higher education

institutes make it ideally placed to foster and support research and innovation activities and create beneficial linkages between industry and higher education.

In order to successfully support balanced development across the county it is important to recognise that innovation and development occur at many different scales. While interactions and innovation between large industries and research institutes can bring benefits on a regional and national scale, business development based on small-scale innovation and research can be hugely important to the economic future of small towns and villages across the county. It is important therefore that Clare County Council supports research and innovation at all scales throughout the county.

Development Plan Objective: Research and Innovation	
CDP6.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support and facilitate the development and progression of beneficial interactions between industries located in County Clare and relevant higher education institutes; b) To work with relevant stakeholders to support research, innovation and enterprise development in the county including incubation facilities for new business development; and c) To work with relevant stakeholders to secure funding to implement innovative and collaborative projects through funding mechanisms such as the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, the Climate Action Fund, Horizon Europe, and the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund amongst others.

6.13 Clare Digital Hub Network

Clare County Council, on foot of the Rural Development Strategy, established the DigiClare initiative to support local communities by providing flexible, affordable and local office facilities and high-speed broadband connectivity across the county. This network of digital hubs facilitates e-working, small-scale training and conferencing facilities. There are digital hubs currently located in Ennis, Cross, Carron, Corofin, Ennistymon, Inagh, Feakle, Kilfenora, Kilkee, Kilrush, Sixmilebridge and Miltown Malbay with additional locations planned across the county including Loughgraney and Scarriff. The hubs aim to attract individuals/enterprises working in the digital and media industries to locate in County Clare including local start-up businesses, start-ups currently based in higher education institutes and existing small to medium national/international businesses. The network also promotes the development of new technologies, interfaces, and methods to address the challenges faced by the aging population. It will prioritise technological solutions that address these challenges including those that allow for greater access to facilities and services for all citizens regardless of age and technological competency. In addition to the roll out of digital hubs,

open Wi-Fi broadband connection points will also be provided at key locations across the county.

Development Plan Objective: Clare Digital Hub Network	
CDP6.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the continued development of the network of digital hubs in order to facilitate remote working/co-working at appropriate locations, to attract new businesses to locate in County Clare, and to support the further growth and development of the digital and media industries in the county.

6.14 Sustainable Design and Working Environments

Quality of life and quality of place is of increasing importance in creating the right conditions to attract and retain businesses, jobs and investment. It influences the decision of a business or investor to locate and remain in a particular area. A high quality and well-designed working environment can foster local economic growth. It also encourages other businesses to invest and attracts employees and visitors to an area.

Clare County Council will work to ensure that new developments deliver sustainable, attractive and healthy working environments. This will be achieved for example, through the provision of landscaping and open space, pedestrian access and safe cycle parking, and, where appropriate, through facilities such as health care, childcare, shopping and leisure facilities.

Development Plan Objective: High Quality Development	
CDP6.13	It is an objective of the Clare County Council: a) To encourage the development of attractive, accessible and healthy working environments that enhance the character and quality of an area; b) To ensure that the design of employment-generating development, regardless of location, is high quality, inclusive and accessible; c) To require new large-scale developments (>75 employees) to prepare and implement a Mobility Management Plan to support the use of sustainable modes of transport; and d) To encourage new employment-generating developments to support modal shift through the provision of facilities such as lockers, changing rooms and drying rooms for their employees.

6.15 Availability of Land and Infrastructure

Infrastructural investment is critical for future economic development activity. It is essential, therefore, that infrastructure providers, such as Irish Water, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and electricity and broadband providers, support Clare County Council’s vision for economic development through their service provision. The Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy contained in Chapter 4 of this Plan, sets out the levels of economic development and growth envisaged for the towns and villages of County Clare based on their position in the Settlement Hierarchy.

The settlement plans contained in Volume 3 of this Plan ensure that lands are appropriately zoned in accordance with the objectives of the NPF and the RSES, meeting the needs of different users and encouraging a diversity of employment-generating development throughout the County.

Where proposals may arise for new employment and enterprise development in the open countryside, only where there are strong locational factors that would make the location of the use in towns and villages undesirable would these be considered by the Council on a case-by-case basis. Such proposals would include the development of commercial/industrial related facilities and associated support services in appropriate locations and any such proposals would be subject to the planning and environmental objectives as set out in this plan.

Development Plan Objective: Availability of Land and Infrastructure	
CDP6.14	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that an adequate supply of land is zoned in appropriate locations throughout the County to support economic development and employment-generating activities; b) To maximise the efficiency of zoned lands by advocating for and facilitating the provision, upgrade or refurbishment of necessary infrastructure; c) To protect land zoned for employment-generating uses from inappropriate development that would negate future economic activity; and d) To ensure that lands are zoned for industry and enterprise development in towns and villages across the County at a scale appropriate to the size and role of the settlement as per the Settlement Hierarchy.

6.16 Brownfield and Infill Sites

The development of infill sites, brownfield sites and disused buildings in urban areas offers excellent opportunities for new employment-generating enterprises whilst also delivering compact growth and therefore will be supported and facilitated by the Council. Such

developments contribute to regeneration and enhance the visual appearance of an area, make more effective use of land and stimulate economic activity in urban and rural areas.

Development Plan Objective: Re-use of Brownfield Sites	
CDP6.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To favourably consider the redevelopment of brownfield sites and disused agricultural or commercial buildings in urban and rural areas for industrial, enterprise or cultural uses subject to normal planning considerations, ensuring that no such developments will adversely affect protected habitats and species; and</p> <p>b) To establish a database of strategic brownfield and infill sites so that brownfield land re-use can be managed and co-ordinated across multiple stakeholders, as part of an active land management process.</p>

6.17 Ancillary Services

In general, Clare County Council will require services such as childcare providers, financial institutions, food providers etc, to locate in town and village centres or other identified appropriate locations across the county. However, it is recognised that it can be beneficial to provide limited ancillary services in larger employment-generating areas. Services such as gyms, childcare facilities, and café/restaurant facilities can enhance the attractiveness of industrial/business parks for potential employers and employees and can also contribute to more sustainable travel patterns for those working in such areas.

Development Plan Objective: Ancillary Services	
CDP6.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To support the development of small-scale ancillary services in large industrial and business parks where they do not detract from the vitality and viability of the town centre in the subject settlement.</p>

6.18 Energy

County Clare's ability to continue to attract and retain high levels of foreign direct investment and to provide a supportive environment for industry will depend on its capacity to deliver a competitive and uninterrupted energy supply. County Clare has a secure energy supply and the network in the county has significant potential to accommodate further generating activity. The county also has potential to increase the production of electricity from renewable energy sources such as wind and tidal energy. The Council's *Wind Energy Strategy* (Volume 6) and *Renewable Energy Strategy* (Volume 5) provide for a strategic plan-led approach to secure renewable energy production in County Clare. The creation and storage of sustainable forms of energy and the associated development of new energy technologies

will assist in the creation of a low-carbon county that can be developed and marketed to the benefit of local business and job creation in the county. The Council supports the ESB’s ‘Green Atlantic’ project for the redevelopment of the Moneypoint power generation station site as a green energy hub and the development of the Shannon Estuary as a focal point for the offshore wind industry in Europe.

Development Plan Objective: Energy Supply	
CDP6.17	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To contribute to the economic development and enhanced employment opportunities in the county by:</p> <p>i) Enabling the development of a self-sustaining, secure, reliable and efficient renewable energy supply and storage for the County in line with CDP Objective 3.3;</p> <p>ii) Facilitating the county to become a leader in the production of sustainable and renewable energy for national and international consumption through research, technology development and innovation; and</p> <p>iii) Supporting on-land and off-shore renewable energy production by a range of appropriate technologies in line with CDP Objective 3.3.</p>

6.19 Green Technology and the Circular Economy

Climate change is one of the greatest global challenges of our time and in 2019 Ireland declared a climate and biodiversity emergency. While it is essential to ensure the safety and quality of life of all residents and the protection of biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation also offers significant potential from an economic development perspective. There are strong growth opportunities in the emerging low carbon goods and services sector such as renewable energy (wind, wave, tidal and biomass and the services that support them), low carbon technologies including alternative fuels for vehicles, carbon capture and storage, and building technologies. Opportunities also exist in environmental management including environmental consultancy, pollution control, waste management, recovery and recycling. Considerable opportunities exist for job creation and economic growth in areas such as green tech and new technology developments. Addressing the impacts of climate change and global warming can drive innovation and stimulate economic growth.

Development Plan Objective: Green Technology	
CDP6.18	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To support the development of low carbon and green tech businesses and industries throughout the County.</p>

**Development Plan Objective:
Circular Economy**

CDP6.19	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the development of industries that create and employ green technologies and take measures to accelerate the transition towards a low carbon economy and circular economy.</p> <p>b) To support the development of social enterprises and the circular economy within local communities to benefit environmental protection, employment generation and community development.</p>
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6.20 Agricultural Development

Agriculture remains a highly important part of the local economy and the sector will be one of the main drivers of economic growth and employment creation in the coming years. Employment opportunities can be created through agricultural development/diversification to supplement farm incomes, to regenerate the rural economy and to sustain rural communities.

**Development Plan Objective:
Agricultural Developments**

CDP6.20	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support and encourage the development of alternative farm enterprise, agri-tourism projects and farm shops on agricultural lands which are complementary to the agricultural operation on the farm and the biodiversity supported by the farm, subject to compliance with appropriate planning, environmental and services requirements; and</p> <p>b) To support and encourage the re-use of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate agri-tourism enterprises subject to compliance with appropriate planning and services requirements.</p>
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6.21 Rural Enterprise

Rural enterprises are vitally important to sustaining rural populations, supporting the rural economy and generally enhancing the fabric of rural society. The Council recognises that businesses in rural areas and their employees benefit from the high quality of life and the opportunities arising from the available capacity in local social, community and educational facilities. Rural areas in proximity to raw materials and resources may have competitive advantages and be best placed to establish niche enterprises ideally located to serve their markets and provide employment in rural areas. There is also a growing trend for the

development of small workshops, some of which are located within the confines of existing houses, in rural areas. Clare County Council will seek to accommodate these, including the suitable expansion of existing facilities wherever possible subject to normal planning considerations.

Proposals for other small-scale enterprises in rural areas will be considered on their individual merits, including:

- the nature of the activity;
- where the workforce is likely to be sourced;
- evidence that its scale is appropriate to a rural area;
- evidence that the enterprise would not be viable on industrial or commercial zoned land in towns and villages nearby;
- evidence that a suitable site is available.

See Development Plan Objective CDP8.3 ‘Alternative Farm Enterprises’ in Chapter 8 for detailed objectives relating to farm enterprises.

6.22 The Food Industry

Food production is a growing industry in County Clare, with businesses ranging from large-scale catering operations to an extensive network of artisan food producers. There is significant potential to grow this industry, particularly in terms of the development and production of new products. To support growth in this industry, Local Enterprise Office Clare encourages and supports the development of networks within the food industry throughout the County.

Development Plan Objective: The Food Industry	
CDP6.21	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To encourage and support the development of food networks throughout the County in order to support the expansion of the food industry.

6.23 Craft/Creative Industries

The craft industry is a dynamic and vibrant sector. It is a key employer and makes a significant contribution to the economy in County Clare. Encompassing a range of different skills including textile making and clothing, pottery and ceramics, jewellery, glass, woodworking, and furniture making, craft industries are characteristically small in scale and are geographically widespread. Enterprises in this sector create employment throughout the county. Clare County Council recognises the importance of these industries, not just in terms of employment creation, but also in terms of the creation of unique products, many of which utilise local resources and contribute to the branding of County Clare as a unique and vibrant County. The Council will also support the provision of training locations for apprenticeships in this sector.

Development Plan Objective: Craft/Creative Industries	
CDP6.22	It is an objective of the Clare County Council: To work in coordination with Local Enterprise Office Clare and all relevant stakeholders to support the further development and expansion of craft industries in County Clare and to proactively seek new market opportunities for locally produced crafts at the local, national and international levels.

6.24 Home-Based Economic Activity and Remote Working

Home-based economic activity, defined as activity in part of a house converted to a home-based (non-retail) business, is increasing significantly as a result of advances in technology and the increased opportunities to work from home. Remote working is the combined use of technology and the flexibility and agility for employees to work from home, from a digital hub or using a hybrid model (part-home, part-office). The pace of change in these work practices has increased significantly due to the societal restrictions associated with the Covid 19 pandemic. Working from home can reduce the need to commute and provides opportunities for all areas of the county to generate employment, thereby supporting rural and urban areas from both a social and economic perspective. The Clare Digital Hub Network and the advances in broadband provision across the county are assisting in facilitating this shift to remote working and the hybrid (part home, part office) working model.

Development Plan Objective: Home Based Economic Activity and Remote Working	
CDP6.23	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support the conversion of part of a dwelling to an appropriate home-based economic activity, where the dwelling remains as the main residence of the practitioner; b) To facilitate home-working and innovative forms of working which reduce the need to travel where, by virtue of their nature and scale, they can be accommodated without detriment to the amenities of residential areas; c) To co-operate with and facilitate government agencies and other bodies where feasible, in encouraging home-based employment; and d) To engage with all relevant stakeholders and broadband infrastructure providers to ensure the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan as well as to support improvements to existing broadband networks.

6.25 The Film Industry

The film industry is hugely important from both a local and national perspective. It creates direct employment, with over 560 small and medium enterprises focused on this sector nationally. It also generates significant positive spin-offs arising from impacts such as the provision of support services and the tourism generated from international exposure. The future expansion of the film industry in County Clare has the potential to have a significant positive impact on job creation and economic growth in the county.

Development Plan Objective: The Film Industry	
CDP6.24	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to promote County Clare as a film location; and b) To support new and existing businesses involved in the film industry in County Clare and to support their future expansion.

6.26 Retail Developments

Retail development plays an important function in the socio-economic development of the county. Its contribution to employment is significant. In addition to generating direct employment, it creates demand for local goods and services. This combination of direct and indirect effects can contribute significantly to the vitality and viability of a town or village, particularly if the workforce resides in the town centre. See Chapter 7 'Retail' for further consideration of retail planning. In addition, Volume 7 comprises the *County Clare Retail Strategy 2023-2029*.

Development Plan Objective: Retail Developments	
CDP6.25	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate and support the implementation of the County Clare Retail Strategy 2023-2029 and to harness the economic potential of retail development at appropriate locations throughout the County.

6.27 Tourism Developments

The tourism industry is one of the main contributors to the economy of County Clare and this is reflected in the considerable on-going investment made by the Council in tourism infrastructure throughout the county. The Covid-19 pandemic brought significant challenges for the tourism industry and whilst uncertainty remains it is envisaged that leisure travel will return to pre-Covid levels when it is safe to do so and that the tourism industry will remain a key economic pillar for the County in the coming years. The *Tourism Strategy 2030* and the forthcoming *Destination Recovery and Strategy Action Plan* will assist and inform the

reopening of County Clare as a tourist destination. See Chapter 9 ‘Tourism’ for further information on the potential of tourism industry in County Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Tourism	
CDP6.26	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To harness the economic potential of tourism in County Clare through the enhancement of tourism and leisure amenities and through supporting the coordination and promotion of appropriate tourism initiatives in accordance with CDP Objective 3.3.

6.28 Data Centres

Data centres are an integral part of the enterprise and business support infrastructure and provide services such as:

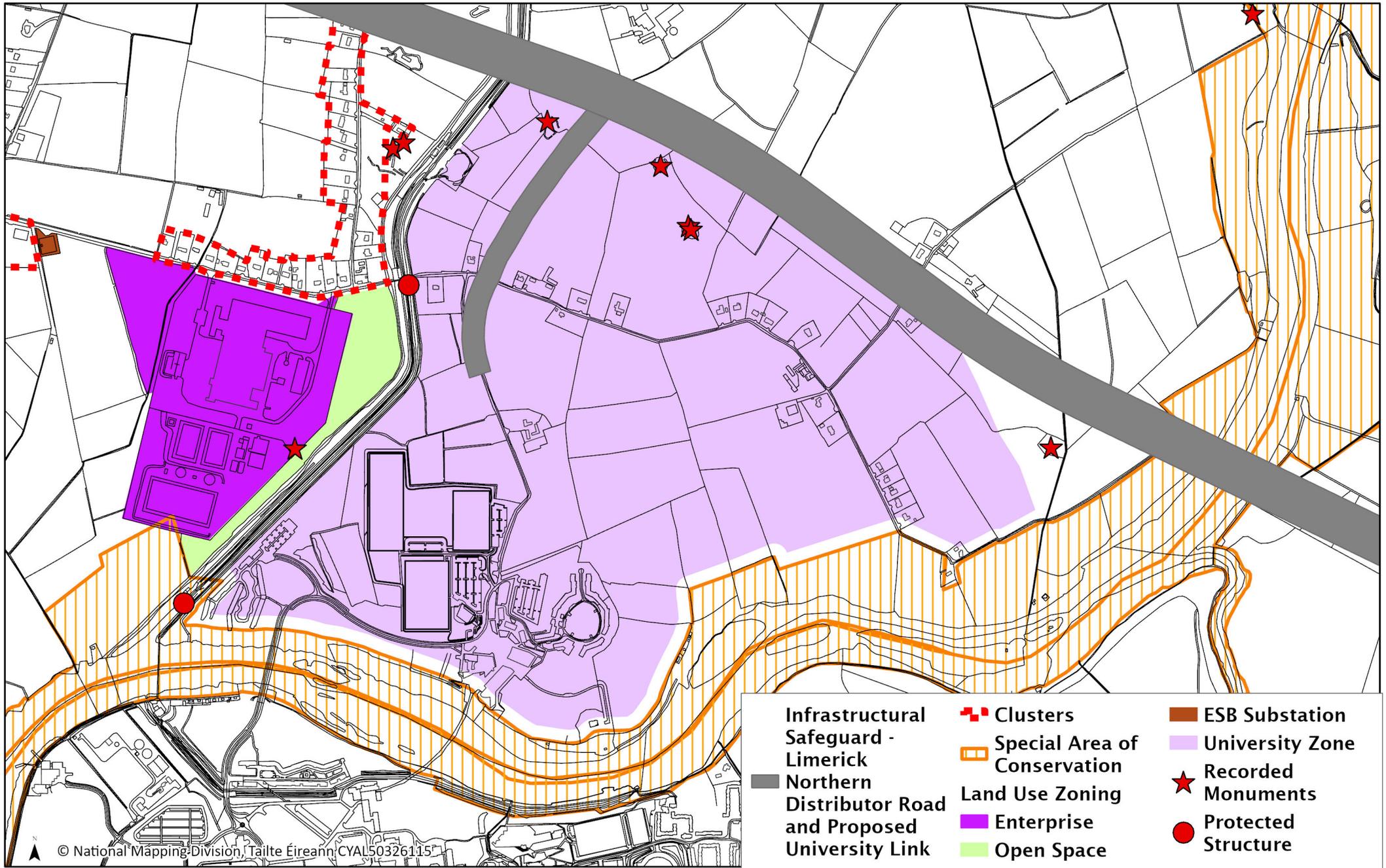
- Data storage, management, backup and recovery;
- Productivity applications, such as email;
- High-volume e-commerce transactions;
- Powering online gaming communities; and
- Big data, machine learning and artificial intelligence.

Project Ireland 2040 - National Planning Framework sets out the strategic importance of data centres in Ireland’s Enterprise Strategy. The *RSES* identifies the development of a data centre in Ennis as an economic driver for the county and the wider Southern Region. Having regard to the *Government Statement on The Role of Data Centres in Ireland’s Enterprise Strategy* (June 2018), which in particular recommends having a plan-led approach to data centres, a 55-hectare site has been identified for Data Centre development. The *Government Statement on The Role of Data Centres in Ireland’s Enterprise Strategy* (July 2022) has also been considered in this plan preparation. This site is zoned as Enterprise (45ha) and Buffer Space (10ha) with a specific use for a Data Centre campus. It is considered appropriate for Data Centre use due to its proximity to the electricity sub-station, its proximity to the M18 motorway and adjoining regional road network, its location relative to the Gas Pipeline, the availability of Dark Fibre and proximity to Shannon International Airport and Ennis Town. This site is zoned to accommodate a Data Centre campus which consists of one or more structures, used primarily for the storage, management and dissemination of data and the provision of associated power electricity connections and energy generating infrastructure. This site is identified as Transformational Site 9 in *Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy*.

Development Plan Objective: Data Centres	
CDP6.27	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate and support the development of a data centre on the Enterprise zoned lands (ENT 3) at Toureen Ennis



subject to normal planning considerations and the implementation of the findings of the SEA and AA associated with this Plan. Any planning application for this site must include an analysis of the impacts from Green House Gas (GHG) Emissions associated with both the energy and cooling systems on the environment in the context of Climate Change and our commitment in CAP 2021 to achieve a reduction of 51% in GHG emissions by 2030, relative to 2018 levels.



Infrastructural Safeguard - Limerick	Clusters	ESB Substation
Northern Distributor Road and Proposed University Link	Special Area of Conservation	University Zone
	Land Use Zoning	Recorded Monuments
	Enterprise	Protected Structure
	Open Space	

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Clare County Development Plan 2023- 2029

Map 6A University of Limerick - Clare Campus



Chapter 7 Retail

Goal VII: A county with viable and vibrant town and village centres, that have shopping areas and markets at appropriate scales and locations and which function to serve their communities and rural hinterlands.

Chapter 7 Table of Contents

7.0	Introduction
7.1	Strategic Aims
7.2	Strategy
7.2.1	Retail Hierarchy
7.2.2	Retail Strategy for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Clare
7.3	Level and Form of Retail Activity
7.3.1	Ennis
7.3.2	Shannon
7.3.3	Service Towns
7.3.4	Small Towns
7.3.5	Large Villages
7.3.6	Small Villages
7.3.7	Retail Activity in Rural Areas
7.4	Town and Village Centre Retailing
7.4.1	Improvement of Town and Village Centres
7.4.2	Diversity of Uses
7.4.3	Improved Accessibility and Mobility
7.4.4	Retail Health Checks
7.4.5	Shop Fronts, Advertising and Signage
7.4.6	Evening and Late Night Uses
7.4.7	Leisure and Entertainment
7.5	Other Forms of Retail
7.5.1	Edge-of-Centre and Out-of-Centre Retailing
7.5.2	Retail Parks/Retail Warehousing
7.5.3	Tourism-Related Retail Developments
7.5.4	Ancillary Retailing
7.5.5	Petrol Filling Stations

7.0 Introduction

Nationally, the retail sector forms a key part of the Irish economy both in terms of direct employment and the employment created in the associated manufacturing, supply and distribution sectors. The retail sector makes a substantial contribution to the financial well-being and social formation of communities throughout the Country.

In County Clare the retail sector is a significant employer. The achievement of a strong retail sector leads to the creation of vibrant town centres that offer a diverse range of services to local residents and communities in surrounding rural hinterlands.

7.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives relating to existing and future retail development in County Clare. In accordance with the overall Vision of the Plan, it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To ensure that the retail needs of the County's residents are met, in so far as possible, within County Clare;
- To promote retail activity in the core areas of towns and villages in the County;
- To ensure that town and village centres are pleasant, safe, accessible and vibrant and attract the public for shopping and social purposes;
- To improve accessibility and ease of movement for all forms of transport in town and village centres;
- To ensure the towns and villages fulfil their retail potential, providing retail services appropriate to the scale and function of the settlement and the surrounding hinterland; and
- To fully examine mechanisms that will assist in bringing forward and delivering the development of town centre sites as well as the redevelopment/rejuvenation of underutilised, vacant and derelict sites for appropriate town centre uses.

7.2 Strategy

The potential of retail outlets to generate footfall means that their location is critical. They have a major bearing on the health of town centres and this, in turn, has a major impact on the vitality of the surrounding hinterland. It is essential to ensure that retail development is plan-led, suitable to the scale of the settlement in which it is located and makes a positive contribution to the surrounding townscape and the overall vibrancy of the area.

7.2.1 Retail Hierarchy

The *Retail Strategy for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Clare* (hereafter referred to as the Retail Strategy) sets out a retail hierarchy for the County and Metropolitan area in order to guide the location, nature and scale of retail developments. The *Retail Strategy* and Retail Hierarchy (Table 7.1 in the *Retail Strategy*) outline the level and form of

retailing activity appropriate to the role of each of the settlements identified in the Settlement Hierarchy in the Core Strategy, in accordance with the requirements of the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012). The Retail Hierarchy for County Clare is as follows:

Table 7.1 Retail Hierarchy

Tier	Level	Location	Status
Tier 2 Major Town Centres		Ennis	Key Town/County Town
Tier 3 Town Centres	Level 1	Shannon	Metropolitan town
	Level 2	Kilrush	Service Town
		Ennistymon/Lahinch	Service Town
		Scarriff/Tuamgraney	Service Town
Tier 4 Neighbourhood and Village Centres	Level 1	Killaloe	Small Town
		Sixmilebridge	Small Town
		Newmarket-on-Fergus	Small Town
		Miltown-Malbay	Small Town
		Kilkee	Small Town
	Level 2	Tulla	Village Centre
		Corofin	Village Centre
		Lisdoonvarna	Village Centre
		Kiladysert	Village Centre
		Ballyvaughan	Village Centre
Tier 5 Local/Corner Shops		Smaller villages/crossroads – rural shops (post offices, creameries, public houses, filling stations, etc.)	Local/Corner Shops

Table 7.2 as below sets out the future retail floorspace in the retail catchments of the County.

Table 7.2: Future Retail Floorspace

Final Future Retail Floorspace Potential (Cumulative) - <u>Adjusted</u> for Vacancy & Pipeline	
Retail Goods Type	Floorspace Capacity (m2)



	2026	2029
[1] Limerick Catchment Metro - Clare Portion		
Convenience Goods	3,594	5,599
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	5,570	12,259
Comparison Goods (Bulky)	-753	311
Total Retail Floorspace Potential	8,411	18,170
[2] Limerick Catchment Remainder - Clare Portion		
Convenience Goods	399	622
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	619	1,362
Comparison Goods (Bulky)	-753	311
Total Retail Floorspace Potential	265	2,296
[3] Ennis Catchment		
Convenience Goods	2,604	3,897
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	2,707	5,924
Comparison Goods (Bulky)	1,481	3,326
Total Retail Floorspace Potential	6,792	13,147
[4] Kilrush Catchment		
Convenience Goods	1,444	2,114
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	1,460	2,274
Comparison Goods (Bulky)	414	751
Total Retail Floorspace Potential	3,319	5,138
[5] Ennistymon Catchment		
Convenience Goods	3,688	4,184
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	623	882

Comparison Goods (Bulky)	134	368
Total Retail Floorspace Potential	4,444	5,434
[6] Scariff Catchment		
Convenience Goods	1,192	1,385
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	94	270
Comparison Goods (Bulky)	-1,219	-1,155
Total Retail Floorspace Potential	66	500
[1]+[2]+[3]+[4]+[5]+[6] County Clare Total (excl. Limerick Catchment portion in Limerick)		
Convenience Goods	12,921	17,801
Comparison Goods (Non-Bulky)	11,073	22,971
Comparison Goods (Bulky)	-697	3,912
Total <u>County</u> Retail Floorspace Potential	23,298	44,684

7.2.2 Retail Strategy for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Clare

The RSES promotes a co-ordinated, co-operative, and collaborative approach between each of the Cities and Key Towns within the Region through the establishment of Metropolitan Area Strategic Plans (MASPs) including the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the Key Town of Ennis. The key objectives are to support a town and village centre first approach in the context of the retail hierarchy, and to promote the vitality and viability of existing centres by focusing development within them and encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment which is accessible to all.

Development Plan Objective: Retail Strategy	
CDP7.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To work with the relevant Local Authorities to implement the Retail Strategy for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Clare in line with the Retail Planning Guidelines and the Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy for the Southern Region; and

	b) To work with adjoining Local Authorities to prepare a Retail Strategy for the wider Region, if deemed necessary, during the lifetime of this Plan.
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7.3 Level and Form of Retail Activity

In line with *Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2012), the following section outlines retail locations in the County and sets out the key objectives for each area, having regard to the Core Strategy and the position of the settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy.

Development Plan Objective: Retail Activity	
CDP7.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>a) To ensure that sufficient lands are appropriately zoned for retail development in each settlement of County Clare to support a level, quantum, and form of retail activity that is appropriate to the position of the settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy for the County;</p> <p>b) To have regard to the guidance set out in <i>Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (2012) in the assessment of development proposals for retail development;</p> <p>c) To improve the physical appearance, vitality and vibrancy of town centre and village locations through collaboration with retail traders’ associations and other key stakeholders in regeneration / public realm projects and other measures;</p> <p>d) To ensure that retail development is focussed in town and village centres with the application of a sequential approach to consideration of retail development which does not fall into this category; and</p> <p>e) To support the Clare Economic Task Force to pursue further economic development opportunities for the County, recognising the clear beneficial relationship between towns and the surrounding rural areas.</p>

7.3.1 Ennis

Ennis is identified as a key town and the triangle of Limerick-Shannon-Ennis is recognised as the economic engine of the Mid-West. The RSES (RPO 13) looks to support economic, retail, commercial and residential development in the town and the maintenance and development of its public infrastructure. Ennis is the primary retail centre within County Clare and is positioned at the top of the Retail Hierarchy in Tier 2 Major Town Centres. As the County town it is a traditional large town with shopping streets and public spaces containing a pleasant mix of cafes, bars, restaurants, specialty shops and fashion boutiques. The focus for Ennis is to

reinvigorate the retail sector in the town and facilitate further retail growth whilst also retaining the historic character of the town centre.

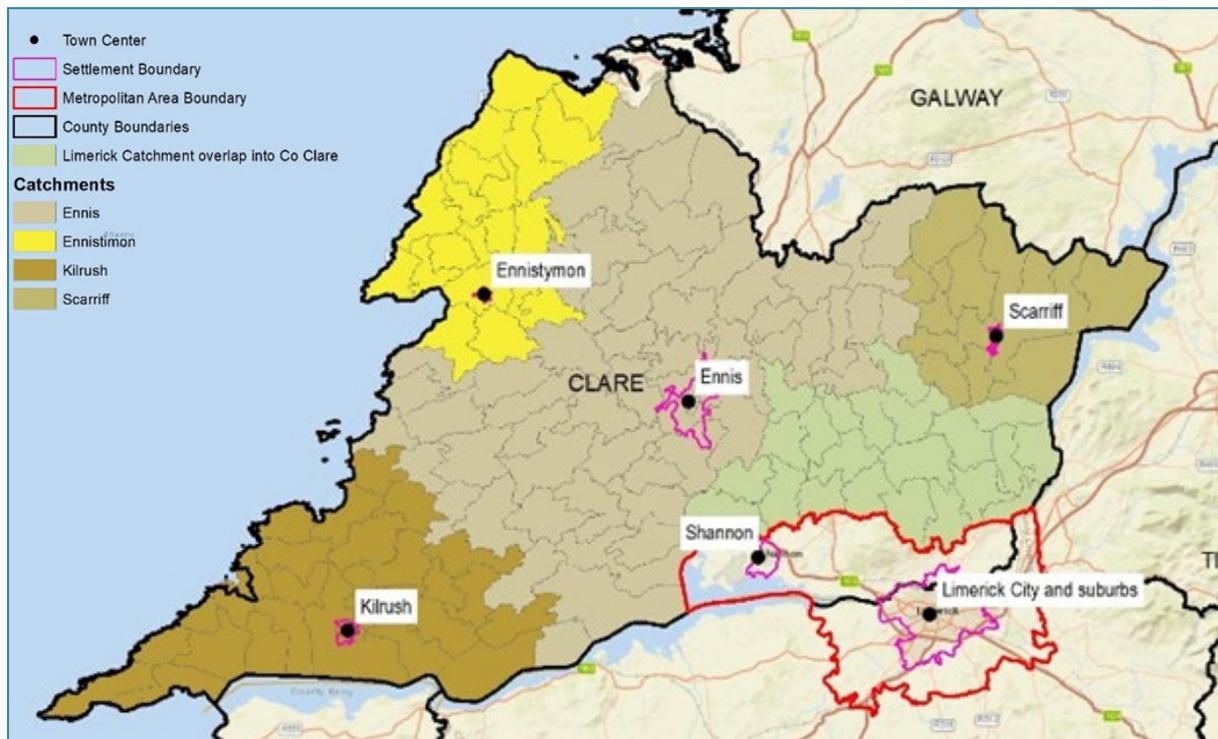


Figure 7.1 Retail Study Catchment Areas

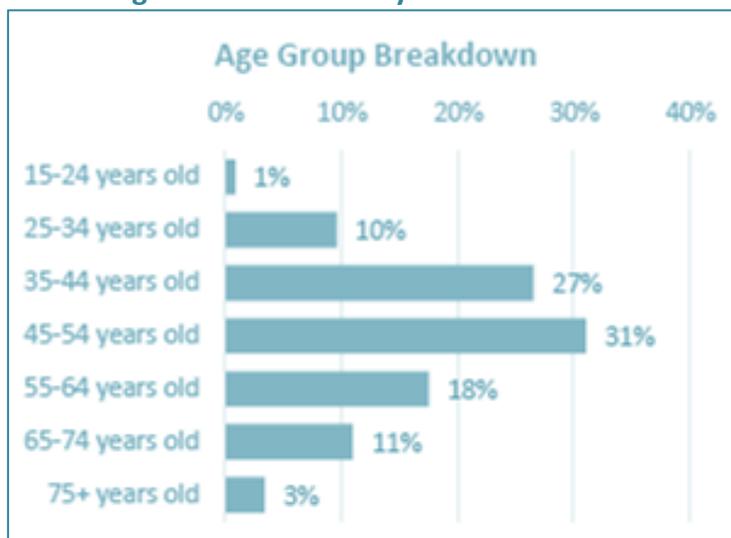


Figure 7.2 Demography within the Ennis Catchment

Development Plan Objective: Ennis Town Centre Retail Offer	
CDP7.3	It is an objective of Clare County Council a) To support the improvement of retail accommodation in Ennis town centre in order to cater for modern retailers, whilst preserving the town’s attractive historic character;

	<p>b) To facilitate the need for additional non-bulky comparison goods floorspace within the town centre, ensuring it is integrated into the existing shopping facilities;</p> <p>c) To harness the retail development potential of any appropriate opportunity/brownfield sites within or adjacent to the town centre;</p> <p>d) To maintain and expand the attractive network of independent fashion boutiques and other speciality shops in the town centre, which combined with the character of the town and its public spaces, creates a niche shopping experience for residents and tourists;</p> <p>e) To carefully consider qualitative factors in assessing the appropriate nature, scale and distribution of any future proposals for new retail development in Ennis town; and</p> <p>f) To support the Ennis 2040 Designated Activity Company to deliver the <i>Ennis 2040</i> strategic objectives and guiding principles.</p>
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Development Plan Objective: Neighbourhood Centres in Ennis	
CDP7.4	It is an objective of Clare County Council To support the development of Neighbourhood Centres in identified areas to provide a mix of uses and services suited to the scale of the local neighbourhood.

7.3.2 Shannon

Shannon, located midway between Limerick and Ennis, is situated between the catchment areas of the two largest shopping areas in the Region and is designated as a Metropolitan Town in the Retail Hierarchy. Shannon has many strengths as a retail destination in itself. It is within the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area, has a sizeable workforce and resident population and has an international airport and brand name. The Council has prepared the Shannon Town Centre Masterplan which will inform the forthcoming Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan. The aim for the town centre is to develop a distinct shopping character to increase Shannon’s attraction and to deliver a vibrant and viable town centre for Shannon with a range of quality retail and service facilities.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon Town Centre	
CDP7.5	It is an objective of Clare County Council a) To support the continuing development of retail facilities in Shannon Town Centre in accordance with the Retail Strategy for the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and

	<p>County Clare, Shannon Town Centre Masterplan and the forthcoming Shannon Local Area Plan; and</p> <p>b) To encourage the growth of retail floorspace so that the town centre can improve its quality of service to its local catchment area.</p>
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7.3.3 Service Towns

The Service Towns in County Clare are designated as Tier 3 Level 2 towns in the Retail Hierarchy. The primary function of Service Towns is the provision of convenience goods and everyday services. Some Service Towns such as Lahinch and Kilrush also benefit from their tourist and visitor function which allows them to support a wider range of comparison goods than would be justified by their local catchment population. The primary objective for these centres is to enhance the quality of their convenience goods provision, enabling the construction of modern food store outlets.

Development Plan Objective: Service Towns	
CDP7.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>a) To support Service Towns as important centres for the provision of convenience goods and retail services; and</p> <p>b) To encourage the provision of good quality convenience outlets capable of supporting a main food-shopping trip.</p>

7.3.4 Small Towns

The Small Towns of Killaloe, Kilkee, Miltown Malbay, Newmarket-on-Fergus and Sixmilebridge are designated as Tier 4 Level 1 towns in the Retail Hierarchy. The primary objective for Small Towns is to maintain and enhance the quality of their convenience goods provision, where necessary, by the construction of modern food store outlets which in turn will reduce the propensity for local shoppers to travel to larger supermarkets for weekly/monthly shopping trips. This will also result in sustainability benefits in terms of reducing the distance travelled to access retail services by providing improved facilities in these towns. Clare County Council will encourage the enhancement of retail services in established town centres, expanding the range of goods and services available for locals and tourists.

Development Plan Objective: Small Towns	
CDP7.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>a) To support small towns as important centres for the provision of convenience goods and retail services for the catchment population;</p> <p>b) To encourage the provision (where not already provided) of good quality convenience outlets capable of supporting a</p>

	<p>main food shopping trip in or on the edge of the town centre; and</p> <p>c) To encourage the provision of tourist and visitor-orientated retail provision to capitalise on the central role that these towns play in the tourism industry in the county.</p>
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7.3.5 Large Villages

The retail function of large village centres is to meet ‘top-up’ convenience shopping needs (i.e., those products which need to be replaced between main food shopping trips) and to provide local services. From a social and economic perspective, they are also important as they constitute a sustainable provision of retailing whilst also binding communities and social networks in rural areas.

While it is unlikely that these centres will attract sufficient expenditure to support the large-scale provision of retail or comparison goods, they remain an important focus of the community, and consequently their continued vitality and viability is strongly supported. The focus will be to ensure that existing retailers remain and, if required, new floor space is provided, either through the construction of additional units or the qualitative improvement of existing floor space, to enhance the level of services provided to local communities.

Development Plan Objective: Large Villages	
CDP7.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council To encourage the retention of existing retail services and facilitate retail development within designated village centres, where it is appropriate to its location and catchment.</p>

7.3.6 Small Villages

Retail services in small villages generally consist of rural shops, petrol filling stations, creameries, post offices and similar type facilities. These services are focal points in the local community and are essential to maintaining a high quality of life in rural areas. For these reasons it is essential that they are enhanced and maintained during the lifetime of this plan. Due to the low population densities in small villages and their surrounding rural hinterland, these settlements generally cannot support extensive or large-scale retail facilities, nor would they be appropriate to the scale of the settlements. However, an increase in the range of services available in small villages will be supported in order to reduce the need to travel to large urban centres for daily essentials and to ensure on-going quality of life for rural residents.

Development Plan Objective: Small Villages	
CDP7.9	It is an objective of Clare County Council To facilitate retail development in small villages where the nature and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to the location and catchment.

7.3.7 Retail Activity in Rural Areas

Retail services in rural areas are most commonly provided in the villages and towns that service the rural hinterland. However certain retail activities can be dispersed throughout the rural area such as farm shops and tourism/craft-based home enterprises. Such retail services, particularly farm-based shops can serve a vital function in rural areas by helping to meet the demand for fresh produce and providing new sources of employment and services, thereby contributing to the diversity of economic activity in rural areas.

Development Plan Objective: Retail Uses in Rural Areas	
CDP7.10	It is an objective of Clare County Council To consider proposals for the introduction of a retail use on a farm where it can be demonstrated that the scale and scope of retailing proposed is ancillary to the continued agricultural use of the farm, and will not harm the vitality and viability of retail facilities in any nearby town or village.

7.4 Town and Village Centre Retailing

7.4.1 Improvement of Town and Village Centres

Vibrant and attractive town and village centres are essential to sustain and attract further retail services in settlements across the County. In order to ensure that town and village centres are attractive spaces, public realm interventions may be required. The retail experience can be greatly enhanced through the provision of high-quality civic spaces. The Council has a key role to play in this area, both by directly carrying out works in town and village centres and by coordinating the work of relevant stakeholders. The Council recognise that the improvement of the public realm and collaboration with stakeholders including the local business community is key to the development of a Town Centre First approach in all towns and villages in the county. (See Chapter 17 Towns and Villages and Chapter 18 Design and Placemaking for further information and detailed objectives relating to town and village centres and the public realm.)

7.4.2 Diversity of Uses

Maintaining the health of town and village centres requires diversity in the services on offer. Maintaining a wide variety of different functions in town and village centres is a key element

in ensuring the on-going vitality of an area. This vitality is threatened by an over-concentration of one particular type of outlet.

Development Plan Objective: Over-Concentration of Uses	
CDP7.11	It is an objective of Clare County Council To ensure that, in the interest of vitality and viability, development proposals result in a balance of services and outlets thus avoiding an over-concentration of a particular type of retail activity in a given area.

7.4.3 Improved Accessibility and Mobility

It is essential that town centres across the County are accessible and accommodate all forms of transport, especially sustainable transport options. Accessibility is a measure of how people of all ages and abilities can use an area. Carpark locations, surface quality, pavement and building design can all contribute to the level of accessibility in a given area. Enhancing accessibility, to ensure that everyone can enjoy the amenities and services of town centre areas, is therefore essential.

To reverse the trend of car dependency in town centres, and increase enjoyment of town centre areas, it is critical to enhance mobility. Efforts are needed to make town centres across the County more pedestrian and cycle-friendly to ensure that sustainable modes of travel are encouraged and supported.

Development Plan Objective: Town Centre Accessibility and Mobility	
CDP7.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council a) To ensure that all new town centre developments, including developments relating to the enhancement of civic spaces and streetscapes, are based on the principles of universal access; and b) To work to ensure that town and village centres are pedestrian-friendly, cycle-friendly and generally promote the safe use of sustainable modes of transport.

7.4.4 Retail Health Checks

The *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012) highlight how the concepts of vitality and viability are central in maintaining and enhancing town centres. The realisation of these essential qualities depends on a balance of many factors, including the range and degree of activities in a town centre, its mix of uses, its accessibility to people living and working in the area along with its general amenity, appearance, and safety. As the attainment and maintenance of town centre vitality and viability are crucial in attracting both retail businesses and consumers, an examination of the health of the County's principal settlements is essential to inform

proposals for improvement in the future. The process by which these qualities are assessed for a specific centre is known as a ‘health check’.

Development Plan Objective: Retail Health Checks	
CDP7.13	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To carry out retail health checks, as required, in accordance with Annex 2 of the <i>Retail Planning Guidelines</i> (2012).

7.4.5 Shop Fronts, Advertising and Signage

High quality shop fronts greatly enhance the attractiveness of an area. The towns and villages of County Clare have a variety of traditional and contemporary shop fronts which reflect and complement the character of the settlements. These shop fronts make an important contribution to the character of the towns and villages across the County.

Commercial businesses must have specific regard to the importance of quality design in terms of shop fronts, signage, and advertisements. Further details of the standards required in relation to signage and advertising is set out in Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines of this plan. The Council will also build on previous initiatives such as Shop Front Schemes during the lifetime of this plan as well as initiatives such as the streetscape and shopfront enhancement measures provided for under the Government’s Town and Village Renewal Scheme.

Development Plan Objective: Shop Fronts	
CDP7.14	It is an objective of Clare County Council a) To encourage the use of traditional shop front designs, materials and signs and to seek the repair and retention of shop fronts of architectural interest, where appropriate; and b) To ensure that new shop fronts and the fronts of other commercial buildings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Display a unity with the building of which they are part, including the use of appropriate materials; II. Reflect the scale and proportion of existing shopfronts on the adjoining buildings and the street scene as a whole; and III. Are of a format and design using appropriate colouring and lettering, which complement the visual amenities of the surrounding buildings and locality.

7.4.6 Evening and Late-Night Uses

A healthy night-time economy contributes greatly to the vitality and viability of a town centre. There is a need to ensure that adequate provision is made for evening and late-night activities

such as restaurants, public houses, taxi offices, hot food takeaways and other similar uses. A vibrant night-time economy brings many benefits such as increased visitor numbers, providing passive surveillance, and increasing the appeal of a town as a destination for artistic and cultural events.

Development Plan Objective: Evening and Late Night Uses	
CDP7.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>a) To support proposals for development involving evening and late-night commercial, retail or entertainment uses within, or immediately adjacent to, the defined centres of towns or neighbourhood centres, where it can be demonstrated that the development will enhance the character and function of the area; and</p> <p>b) To encourage the provision of limited on-site eating floor-space as part of hot food takeaway developments in order to assist in reducing disturbance and littering in public streets and places.</p>

7.4.7 Leisure and Entertainment

Leisure and entertainment facilities form an essential component of the mix of uses required to ensure town centre vibrancy and vitality. They make a particularly important contribution to retaining vibrancy outside of regular business hours.

Development Plan Objective: Leisure and Entertainment Facilities	
CDP7.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>To consider proposals for the establishment of leisure or entertainment facilities within, or immediately adjacent to, town centres or other centres, where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will enhance the character and function of the area including in respect of signage.</p>

7.5 Other Forms of Retail

7.5.1 Edge-of-Centre and Out-of-Centre Retailing

Edge-of-centre sites are located within easy walking distance (generally no more than 300-400m) of the primary retail areas in the town whereas out-of-centre retail development is clearly separated from the town centre but within the settlement boundaries of urban areas identified in the development plan. Retail proposals at these locations will be assessed in accordance with the *Retail Strategy*.

Development Plan Objective: Edge-of-Centre Retail Development	
CDP7.17	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To assess applications for edge-of-centre and out-of-centre retail developments having regard to the criteria and considerations set out in <i>Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (2012) and the <i>Clare Retail Strategy</i>; b) To apply the sequential test to development proposals for edge of centre retail developments; and c) To permit edge of centre retail developments only where such development will strongly integrate into the existing town centre and will not have a negative impact on the vitality and viability of the relevant town centre, and subject to normal planning requirements, including the requirement to be served by public transport and to be accessible to their catchment by walking and cycling.

7.5.2 Retail Parks/Retail Warehousing

A retail park comprises an agglomeration of retail warehouses grouped around a common carpark selling mainly bulky goods. In keeping with the *Retail Planning Guidelines* (2012) there will be a presumption against further development of out-of-town retail parks in the Plan area. However, there is an identified need for retail warehouse development of notable scale in the Ennis retail catchment area, alongside more modest requirements towards the end of the Plan period identified in the retail catchment areas encompassing Kilrush, Shannon and the County-Clare portion of the shared Limerick retail area.

Development Plan Objective: Retail Parks/Retail Warehousing	
CDP7.18	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To encourage and facilitate an improved bulky comparison retail offer in Ennis where it can be achieved through a qualitative improvement of existing retail floorspace; and b) To consider new retail warehouse development in the other retail catchment areas, in instances where it would target a qualitative improvement of existing bulky goods retailing and without exceeding the additional requirements identified. Further, that any such consideration be subject to the application of the sequential test and the preparation of a Retail Impact Assessment to ensure that there will be no negative impacts on the vitality and viability of associated town centre areas.

7.5.3 Tourism-Related Retail Developments

It is an objective of the Council to support niche tourism and innovative tourist enterprises to enhance the diversity and quality of local visitor experiences and to stimulate increased visitor numbers. Clare County Council will give favourable consideration to tourist-related retail developments in settlements and in established tourist attractions throughout the County. The *Promote Ennis: Niche Destination Plan* has been produced with a development focus on Ennis realising the significant opportunity that tourism presents for increased economic activity. Tourism retail will be encouraged at appropriate and established tourist locations where it can be shown that the tourism attraction concerned is well-established and has a suitable existing flow of visitors sufficient to make a retail facility viable. The retail facility must not detract from the main tourist attraction on the site.

Development Plan Objective: Tourism-Related Retail	
CDP7.19	It is an objective of Clare County Council To encourage and facilitate the delivery of sustainable tourism-related retail developments and initiatives, of appropriate scale, located in settlements and in the vicinity of established tourism attractions.

7.5.4 Ancillary Retailing

It is recognised that some industrial and commercial businesses also operate small-scale retail facilities, subsidiary to their main operations, to provide direct sales to the public. Such operations will be considered having regard to the location of the business, the extent of retail activity that will be generated and the potential impact on both surrounding businesses and town centre retail activity.

Development Plan Objective: Ancillary Retailing	
CDP7.20	It is an objective of Clare County Council To facilitate industrial and commercial businesses located in premises outside the town centres to trade with retail customers where such retailing operations are ancillary to the business as a whole and where they do not have a negative impact on neighbouring businesses and/or town centre retailing.

7.5.5 Petrol Filling Stations

Small shops associated with petrol filling stations can be a cost-effective way of providing the equivalent services of a local shop. It is considered appropriate for petrol filling stations to provide limited retail facilities on site provided they are of a small scale and ancillary to the main purpose of the filling station. The Council will consider proposals on a case-by-case basis and may limit the range of retail goods available for purchase at petrol filling stations in order

to protect the viability and vitality of existing retail centres. Such facilities will generally not be acceptable in rural areas where the maximum speed limit applies.

Development Plan Objective: Petrol Filling Stations	
CDP7.21	It is an objective of Clare County Council To consider development proposals for petrol filling stations, and associated shops with a floor space up to 100m ² (net), on their individual merits, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations Where permission is sought for associated shops with a floorspace is in excess of 100m ² (net), the sequential approach shall also be applied.

Chapter 8 Rural Development and Natural Resources

Goal VIII: A county with diverse and strong rural communities and economy, where its natural resources are sustainably managed in a manner that is compatible with the sensitivity of rural areas and the existing quality of life.

Chapter 8 Table of Contents

8.0	Introduction
8.1	Strategic Aims
8.2	Strategy
8.2.1	Rural Settlement Strategy
8.2.2	Economic Development in Rural Areas
8.2.3	Farm-Based Rural Enterprise
8.2.4	Agriculture, Agri-Food and Agri-Tech
8.2.5	Agri-Tourism Development
8.2.6	Local Services and Shops in Rural Areas
8.2.7	Rural Transport
8.2.8	Rural Broadband
8.3	Natural Resources
8.3.1	Fishing and Aquaculture
8.3.2	Forestry
8.3.3	Bio-Energy
8.3.4	Renewable Energy
8.3.5	Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction
8.3.6	Extractive Industry

8.0 Introduction

The strategic aims and objectives required to promote the sustainable development of rural communities whilst maintaining their intrinsic qualities and vibrancy, and also to manage and develop County Clare's natural resources are set out in this Chapter.

8.1 Strategic Aims

In accordance with the overall vision of the plan, objectives are based on the following strategic aims:

- To reinforce the vitality and future of rural villages and settlements and to recognise the roles that they play in the wider social and economic context;
- To encourage and support the social and economic development of rural parts of the County;
- To support local rural economies and communities and facilitate the diversification of local rural enterprises and work practices;
- To ensure that key assets of rural areas such as the natural and built environment are protected and enhanced, and that rural areas with resources such as renewable energy, water sources, and aggregates are sustainably developed; and
- To harness a pride of place among rural communities and to assist rural communities to promote their cultural and natural resources.

8.2 Strategy

County Clare's rural areas are home to a diverse range of activities including agriculture, tourism, residential, commercial and recreation. The County has a long tradition of rural living, and the Council will support the continued sustainable development of Clare's rural areas. The Renewed Rural Development Strategy 2030 entitled "*Realising Clare's Rural Potential: Our Life, Our Home*" for County Clare is based on the *NPF* National Planning Objectives 14 to 25 which aim to promote rural growth and arrest rural decline while revitalising and reinvigorating rural communities. This chapter is also consistent with other higher level policy documents including the *RSES*, *Foodwise 2025*, *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025*, the *CEDRA Report*, and the *Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities*.

The *RSES* reflects the *NPF* statement that the rural countryside "is and will continue to be, a living and lived-in landscape focusing on the requirements of rural economies and rural communities, based on agriculture, forestry, tourism and rural enterprise, while at the same time avoiding ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas and protecting environmental qualities". The Council supports the implementation of all National and Regional Policy Objectives at local level and it is the broad objective of the Council's rural development strategy to provide for sustainable rural economies and rural communities.

8.2.1 Rural Settlement Strategy

Rural development that is environmentally, socially and economically sustainable assists in strengthening existing rural communities and contributes to the viability of local services such as schools and local shops. The Settlement Strategy for rural areas within the County is set out in Chapter 4 ‘Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy’ of this Plan and is based on the positive principle that local rural people will be facilitated to live in their own local rural areas.

8.2.2 Economic Development in Rural Areas

The Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA) 2014 report *Energising Ireland’s Rural Economy* recognised the wide variety of high-quality assets and the abundance of capital, human, physical and natural resources, including dormant assets, in many rural communities, and the potential to leverage these to support national economic growth and the development of these communities. The Commission recommended the development of a Rural Town Stimulus Programme that focuses on rural towns/villages and their hinterlands and the ‘Town and Village Renewal Scheme’ was subsequently launched in 2016.

Furthermore, the Department for Rural and Community Development was established in 2017 and the *Action Plan for Rural Development – Realising our Rural Potential 2017-2019* was launched in November 2018. The Action Plan set out 277 actions to assist the regeneration of rural towns and villages, 269 of which have either delivered or substantially advanced including the delivery of 222,600 new jobs outside of the Dublin region, over 660 town and village revitalisation projects funded via €58million in Town and Village Renewal Scheme, 7,400 community projects and 77% of homes connected to high-speed broadband.

The *Action Plan for Rural Development* sets out a number of actions to assist the regeneration of rural towns and villages such as the review of planning legislation regarding changes of use in town centres, the increased delivery of small housing schemes in rural towns, the continued delivery of the social housing programme under the *Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness* and a review of the Derelict Sites legislation.

The Action Plan has been superseded by *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* which was launched in March 2021 and includes 152 Actions to be implemented over the next 5 years across a range of government departments and agencies. The plan will be underpinned by investment in areas such as the roll-out of high-speed broadband, remote working, job creation, town centre regeneration, community development, improvements in regional and local roads, new cycling and walking infrastructure, expanded rural transport services, funding for tourism, culture and heritage projects, and a just transition to a climate-neutral society.

Following the publication of the Government’s Action Plan for Rural Development, County Clare was the first county to launch a rural development strategy the *Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026* which has now been superseded by the *Renewed Clare Rural Development Strategy 2030*. The Strategy outlines a pathway to revitalised and reinvigorated rural communities across the County. It targets a number of key areas including the creation of jobs

in community-based and community run social enterprises over its lifetime, the establishment of digital hubs across the County, the development of community-run multi-service centres and the development of innovative rural transport initiatives.

Development Plan Objective: Rural Economic Development	
CDP8.1	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to deliver the actions identified under the <i>Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025</i> and the Rural Development Programme 2014-2022 (and any subsequent programmes). b) To promote and support the development and implementation of a Rural Town Stimulus Programme and to seek investment from sources such as the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to support regeneration and economic growth in rural areas of County Clare; c) To harness the potential of shared learning and good practice from European Programmes and policy to assist rural development; and d) To further develop a diverse base of smart economic specialisms involving innovation and diversification in rural areas, in agriculture, the marine, forestry, peatlands, renewable energy, tourism (leveraging the opportunities from the Wild Atlantic Way and Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands corridors), social enterprise, circular economy, knowledge economy, global business services, fin-tech, specialised engineering, heritage, arts and culture, design and craft Industries as dynamic drivers for the rural economy.

Development Plan Objective: Rural Innovation, Enterprise and Employment	
CDP8.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To encourage growth and arrest the decline of rural areas through supporting the sustainable development of these areas by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Facilitating innovative rural enterprises and the diversification of the rural economy into new sectors and services including ICT based industries and those addressing climate change and sustainability; b) To give favourable consideration to the sustainable development of existing and start-up rural resource-based industries in rural areas; c) Supporting and facilitating proposals for new small-scale rural enterprises or extensions to existing small-scale rural-based indigenous industries;

	<p>d) Encouraging new commercial uses for vacant or derelict buildings, including historic buildings and buildings in rural areas subject to compliance with appropriate planning, wildlife legislation and service requirements; and</p> <p>e) Encouraging and supporting the sustainable development of new rural and farm-related enterprises, existing initiatives, innovation in indigenous enterprise (both high-tech and traditional) and on and off farm employment activities.</p>
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8.2.3 Farm-Based Rural Enterprise

Many farmers and landowners, through innovation and the utilisation of local/natural resources, now subsidise their farming by diversifying into new enterprises. The rural economy has the potential to offer many viable and sustainable employment opportunities and the Council will encourage and facilitate the development of small-scale rural enterprises where possible. In order to further support rural enterprise the Council will give favourable consideration to home based enterprises and will also promote the establishment of a number of small-scale incubator units in rural areas.

Development Plan Objective: Alternative Farm Enterprises	
CDP8.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To assist the sustainable development of the rural economy through the facilitation and encouragement of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Alternative farm enterprises, agri-tourism projects agri-tech, agri-food, and farm shops; ii) The re-use of redundant farm buildings of vernacular importance for appropriate agri-tourism enterprises, subject to compliance with appropriate planning, environmental and services requirements and the appropriate maintenance and protection of Clare's natural landscapes and built heritage which are vital to rural tourism and ensure development is in compliance with the environmental requirements of Objective CDP3.3; and iii) Farm-based renewable energy technologies such as bio-energy and anaerobic digestion, in compliance with relevant environmental legislation.

8.2.4 Agriculture, Agri-Food and Agri-Tech

The agricultural sector is a considerable source of economic activity and income generation in County Clare. It provides the raw materials for the food processing industry and has potential for providing further added value in the agri-food sector. The Council will take a positive approach to applications for sustainable agricultural developments generally, subject to the protection of ground waters, amenities, designated habitats and the landscape.

The agri-food sector is one of Ireland’s most important indigenous industries and is of vital importance to the economy of County Clare. Food production continues to grow and is particularly important in rural areas where a strong speciality/artisan food sector has emerged.

National level strategies such as *Food Harvest 2025*, *Food Wise 2025*, and the *Agri-Food Strategy to 2030* (currently in draft) emphasise the importance of this sector and its potential for enhanced growth. The agri-food industry, and in particular local food production, has an important role to play in ensuring sustainability and resilience. Local food production can provide both local employment and a superior product for the consumer. The economic contribution of artisan food and beverage production continues to grow in the County and this is particularly the case in rural areas. Several popular food and beverage-based festivals take place in County Clare each year and food trails around the County have also grown in popularity.

Agri-tech is the use of technology for farming to improve efficiency and profitability. This technology aims to improve farming through information monitoring and analysis of issues such as weather, pests, soil and air temperature. The Council encourages the use of such technologies in the agricultural sector.

Development Plan Objective: Agriculture	
CDP8.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate proposals for sustainable and economically efficient agricultural and horticultural development whilst maintaining and protecting the environment, the natural landscape and built heritage; b) To encourage the linking of agricultural production with added value enterprise and the diversification of rural enterprises; c) To support the development of rural/farmers markets and the development of food-based enterprises and tourism activities; and d) To support the on-going growth and development of the artisan food sector in the County.

8.2.5 Agri-Tourism Development

County Clare benefits from a wealth of rural amenities which provide a high quality of life for local residents and which support a year-round tourism offering. Agri-tourism developments such as equestrian centres, pitch and putt courses, outdoor pursuit centres, farmhouse guest accommodation, pet farms and small-scale craft centres have the potential to further diversify this offering and the Council will encourage and facilitate such developments where appropriate.

8.2.6 Local Services and Shops in Rural Areas

The importance of retaining local services and shops to sustain rural communities and the challenges faced in achieving this are acknowledged by the Council. To retain the critical mass of these areas necessary for the viability of these services the Council will seek to enable the future growth and sustainable development of services in these areas.

Development Plan Objective: Rural Services	
CDP8.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To encourage the development and facilitate the retention, where possible, of local services and shops in rural areas; and</p> <p>b) To facilitate the redevelopment of existing services as other enterprises within the countryside where necessary.</p>

8.2.7 Rural Transport

The provision of a high quality, inter-connected system of transport in rural Ireland is key to the realisation of the inherent social and economic potential which exists in rural areas. Public transport provision enhances connectivity to and within rural areas, assists in sustaining rural communities, achieving social inclusion, and improving quality of life for people in these areas. Regional bus services are provided within the County by Bus Éireann and private operators.

In rural areas, due to low population densities and relatively limited patronage the costs associated with the provision of conventional bus services can be prohibitive. Rural communities are more reliant on private transport with high levels of car ownership. However, for elderly or mobility impaired people and those on low incomes, access to private transport remains difficult and therefore the provision of such rural bus services is particularly important.

The *RSES* recognises the critical role of rural transport services in providing social and economic connectivity between small villages/rural areas and larger towns. ‘Clare Bus’ and ‘Local Link Limerick Clare’ operate community-based bus services throughout the County which provide connectivity between rural areas and local service centres. In recognising the importance of community-based accessible transport and in accordance with the *RSES* and the *Local Link Rural Transport Programme Strategic Plan 2018 to 2022*, the Council will encourage and facilitate the further development of such initiatives within the County and the development of better linkages with other transport services. In addition, the Council notes and supports the upcoming NTA programme *Connecting Ireland* which seeks to address the gaps in connections to local and regional centres in rural areas, to allow for the possibility of access to local services without a car and to transition to a low/zero emission fleet wherever practicable.

One option is to explore the role of taxi-bus services linked with the main inter-urban bus corridors and the reshaping of the hinterland bus service in a more formulated ‘hub and

spoke’ service plan connecting into the main public transport nodes. In this regard, Action 94 of *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025* requires the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the National Transport Authority to provide improved rural public transport services and pilot new transport initiatives through developing a subsidised Local Area Hackney Scheme in designated rural areas.

Development Plan Objective: Rural Transport	
CDP8.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the retention and enhancement of existing rural transport services in County Clare and the expansion of the Local Link Rural Transport Programme by the National Transport Authority in the following manner:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek further integration with other public transport services, including HSE and school transport • Better linkage of services between towns, villages and rural areas • Ensure fully accessible vehicles operate on all services • Enhance the customer experience • Increase patronage among children and young people • Encourage innovation in the service <p>b) To support the provision of new rural transportation initiatives which provide greater accessibility between towns and villages and all rural areas;</p> <p>c) To encourage the development of ‘hub and spoke’ rural transport services at key locations in order to support the integration of local and regional transport services; and</p> <p>d) To support the provision of regular express bus services throughout the County and to encourage private-public partnership in the provision of more widespread rural bus services.</p>

8.2.8 Rural Broadband

Access to high quality broadband is a fundamental requirement for the economic prosperity and social development of rural areas and given the rural nature of the majority of County Clare the implementation of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) is essential. Rural broadband can serve rural enterprises, facilitate distance learning, provide opportunities to work from home, assist modern farming practices, help to alleviate isolation and improve the sustainability of travel patterns.

The remote working requirements associated with the Covid-19 pandemic have shown the value of digital technology by enabling workers, businesses and families in Clare to stay connected to each other. The NBP aims to address Ireland’s connectivity challenges by ensuring that every premises has access to high-speed broadband services. A total of 33% of the 69,225 premises in Clare are located within ‘Intervention Areas’ (Dec 2020 Figures) and

will therefore receive access to high quality broadband via the NBP rollout with the needs of all other premises being met by private telecommunications providers.

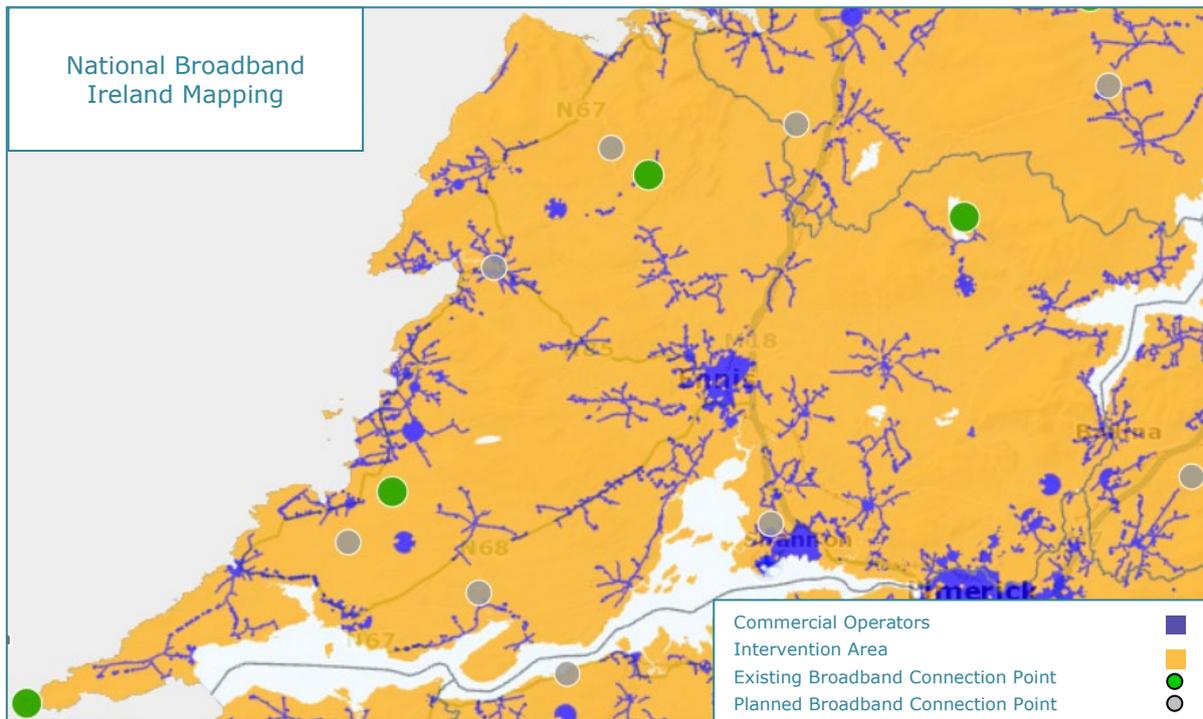


Figure 8.1 County Clare Broadband & Intervention Area Map

DigiClare is an initiative of Clare County Council that was established on foot of its rural development strategy, *Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026*, to support rural communities by providing flexible, affordable, and local office facilities and high-speed broadband connectivity in rural locations in the County. These digital hubs utilise broadband and digital technology as a key enabler of rural development and support rural social enterprises and the wider community by facilitating e-working, small-scale training and conferencing. There are digital hubs currently located in Ennis, Cross, Carron, Corofin, Ennistymon, Feakle, Kilfenora, Kilkee, Kilrush, Inagh, Sixmilebridge and Miltown Malbay with additional locations planned across the County including Loughgraney and Scarriff. In addition to the roll out of digital hubs open Wi-Fi broadband connection points will be provided in:

Caherconnell Stone Fort	Cree Community Centre	Cross National School
Ennis	Ennistymon	Flagmount National School
Halla Eoin Kilbaha	Kilfenora	Kilrush
Michael Cusack Centre	Loop Head Lighthouse and Visitor Centre	Obair Centre Newmarket on Fergus

Development Plan Objective: Rural Broadband	
CDP8.7	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support and facilitate the expedited delivery of the National Broadband Plan as a means of developing further opportunities for enterprise, employment, education,

	innovation and skills development for those who live and work in rural areas in accordance with the findings of the Intervention Strategy SEA, NIR and associated Best Practice Guidance.
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8.3 Natural Resources

Clare is a county rich in natural resources, the sustainable exploitation of which has the potential to contribute significantly to both the local and national economy.

Development Plan Objective: Natural Resources	
CDP8.8	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate, encourage and appropriately manage the development of the natural resources of the County and to ensure that this is done in a sensitive way, eliminating any significant adverse effects on the natural and built environment, negative impacts on archaeological heritage and in compliance with all relevant legislation and planning requirements.

8.3.1 Fishing and Aquaculture

County Clare has an extensive coastline (192km Atlantic seaboard and 168km of estuarial freshwater coastline) and in accordance with *Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025*, the *National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)* and the *RSES* the Council aims to maximise the long-term contribution of the sea-fishing sector and inland fisheries to the County's economy and to the maintenance of the social fabric of rural and coastal communities.

Fishing and aquaculture also contribute significantly to the rural economy through marine tourism activities. Charter deep-sea fishing trips operate from Carrigaholt, Kilbaha and Kilrush and potential exists to further expand these industries through the integration of marine leisure/tourism activities with complementary on-shore hospitality in relevant coastal settlements. In accordance with the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 the Council will work with relevant partners to identify and address infrastructural requirements aimed at strengthening angling opportunities in the County.

The sea vegetable industry in Ireland is currently in its infancy. Where developed sustainably this industry has the potential to assist in the further diversification of the rural economies of coastal communities.

See Section 13.9 in Chapter 13 of this Plan for further information and detailed objectives relating to commercial fishing and aquaculture.

Development Plan Objective:

Non- Commercial Fishing

CDP8.9

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

To support the expansion of non-commercial fishing activities in coastal communities and the development of complementary on-shore hospitality facilities/services in a sensitive way and subject to normal environmental and planning considerations.

8.3.2 Forestry

Forestry plays an important role in terms of rural development and diversification in County Clare and has the potential to provide further economic, environmental, and social gains. The Council will work with the relevant stakeholders to accommodate sustainable native broadleaf and coniferous afforestation in the County. In this regard Clare County Council is a consultative body in relation to applications to the Forestry Service for initial afforestation and submits observations to the Forestry Service on such applications, as appropriate.

Irish sawmilling and board manufacturing is competitive internationally and further growth is anticipated in this area. The spin-off industries associated with forestry include the harvesting, transportation and processing of the raw material. The Council will actively encourage and facilitate, where appropriate, the sustainable development of the forestry sector at a scale and in a manner that maximises its contribution to the local economies both rural and urban.

In addition to economic benefits, forests are natural resources that provide recreational, tourism and environmental opportunities and are also important as links in the County's green infrastructure network. The Council also acknowledges that the forestry sector is the largest and most readily available biomass resource in Ireland and there is significant scope for wood fuel to replace consumer dependence on fossil fuels.

Development Plan Objective:

Forestry

CDP8.10

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To promote and encourage state and private afforestation and reforestation throughout the countryside in appropriate locations, in compliance with Objective CDP3.1 and on suitable soil types as a means of promoting rural diversity and strengthening both the rural and urban economy;
- b) To support the development of enterprises ancillary to the forestry industry, in particular value-improvement enterprises relating to timber extracted from County Clare forests; and
- c) To encourage the sustainable development of native woodlands as a means of enhancing biodiversity, climate and flood mitigation, carbon sequestration, landscape

	enhancement, recreational amenity, educational resource and strengthening the rural economy.
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8.3.3 Bio-Energy

The bioeconomy comprises “the production of renewable biological resources [such as crops, forests, fish, animals, and micro-organisms] and the conversion of these resources and waste stream residues, by-products or municipal solid waste into value added products, such as food, feed, bio-based products and bio energy” *Innovating for Sustainable Growth: A Bioeconomy for Europe* (E.C. 2012).

The bio-energy industry offers economic benefits for rural areas and for people involved in agriculture and forestry. People working in these areas can supplement their income by engaging with the bio-energy industry through the production of biomass, anaerobic digestion, liquid bio-fuels and the use of forestry thinning. This will make a significant contribution to the development of a sustainable, low carbon, resources efficient and competitive economy in County Clare.

See Volume 5 ‘Clare Renewable Energy Strategy’ of this plan for further information and detailed objectives on the future development of the biomass and bio-energy industry in the County.

Development Plan Objective: Bio-Energy	
CDP8.11	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support initiatives for energy research funding and to encourage the development of bio-energy opportunities, facilities and associated rural enterprises in the countryside in appropriate locations where such activities do not have a significant negative impact on the environment and where they assist in the move away from fossil fuels to green energy.

8.3.4 Renewable Energy

There is significant potential for the development of renewable energy in County Clare. The County has one of the best wind resources in the world – almost the entire County has either an excellent or very good wind energy resource. However, the development and siting of wind energy projects must be balanced with the potential impacts on the landscape, ecology and the amenities of local communities. Areas that are considered suitable for commercial wind energy developments are set out in Volume 6 of this Plan. There is also potential for other forms of renewable energy generation, such as anaerobic digestion and solar energy that can be integrated into both domestic and agricultural settings. The Council recognises that community ownership of renewable energy developments enables local communities to directly benefit from local energy resources which will assist in ensuring long-term incomes

for rural communities. See Volume 5 ‘Clare Renewable Energy Strategy’ of this plan for further information and detailed objectives relating to renewable energy generation in the county.

Development Plan Objective: Renewable Energy Development	
CDP8.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the implementation of the <i>National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP)</i> , the <i>Clare Wind Energy Strategy</i> and the <i>Clare Renewable Energy Strategy</i> to facilitate the development of renewable energy developments in rural areas to meet national objectives towards achieving a low carbon economy by 2050 subject to the requirement of the RES SEA Environmental Report and the mitigation measures arising from the CDP Appropriate Assessment as contained in Volume 10(a).

8.3.5 Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction

In line with European policy, the Council applies the precautionary principle in respect of development where significant environmental implications are involved. In particular, the Council is conscious of its responsibility to protect and maintain the air and water quality in the County, so as to ensure a safe and healthy living environment for present and future generations. Therefore, the Council has set out the following objective with regard to hydrocarbon exploration and extraction.

Development Plan Objective: Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction	
CDP8.13	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To require the application of the precautionary principle to Unconventional Oil/Gas Exploration and Extraction (UGEE) projects/operations proposed within the County subject to the requirements of CDP Objective 3.1.

8.3.6 Extractive Industry

County Clare benefits from reserves of stone, sand, gravel and peat which are worked at many locations across the County. There is also potential for the extraction of precious and base minerals in the County. The Council recognises the importance of the extractive industry in the County and the contribution the industry makes to the construction sector, employment generation and economic life. The extraction and processing of these materials and minerals, together with the decommissioning and restoration of all sites, requires appropriate management in order to minimise the potential impact on the environment. The Council will facilitate the harnessing of the area’s natural resources whilst ensuring that the receiving environments amenities are appropriately protected.



Development Plan Objective: Minerals, Mining and Quarrying	
CDP8.14	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To promote the extraction of minerals and aggregates and their associated processes where such activities do not have a significant negative impact on the environment, landscape, public health, archaeology, County Geological sites and/or sites of geological importance or residential amenities of the receiving environment and where such operations are in compliance with all national regulations and guidelines applicable to quarrying and mining activities.b) To avoid an unreasonable risk of environmental harm due to the toxicity of chemicals and their demonstrated potential to cause damage to the environment, the use of the following chemicals as a processing agent shall be prohibited from use in any proposed processing operation located above or adjacent to surface or ground water or which could potentially impact such waters regardless of their location – mercury, cyanide or cyanide compounds, breakdown products of cyanide or sulfuric acid.c) To support the satisfactory and sensitive re-instatement and / or re-use of disused quarries and extraction facilities, where active extraction use has ceased. Future uses should include amenity, recreation and biodiversity areas and shall be informed by an assessment of the specific site/lands in accordance with the restoration plan under the facility's EPA licence.

Chapter 9 Tourism

Goal IX: A county in which tourism growth continues to play a major role in its future development. A county which is the gateway to the west, delivering tourism experiences which reflect our strong commitment to sustainability, connectivity, innovation and new approaches to doing business. A place that is globally recognised as a sustainable destination and where the benefits of tourism are spread across the county throughout the seasons.

Chapter 9 Table of Contents:

9.0	Introduction
9.1	Strategic Aims
9.2	Strategy
9.2.1	Tourism Promotion
9.2.2	Integrated Tourism Products
9.2.3	Tourism Developments and Tourist Facilities
9.2.4	Visitor Accommodation
9.2.5	Wild Atlantic Way
9.2.6	Shannon Estuary Way
9.2.7	Irelands Hidden Heartlands
9.2.8	Business Tourism
9.2.9	Activity and Adventure Tourism
9.2.10	Educational Tourism
9.2.11	Rural Tourism and Forestry Tourism
9.2.12	Arts, Crafts and Food Tourism
9.2.13	Coastal Tourism
9.2.14	Lakeland and Waterway Tourism
9.2.15	Urban Tourism
9.2.16	Festivals and Events
9.2.17	Heritage and Cultural Tourism
9.2.18	Sustainable and Responsible Tourism
9.2.19	Niche Tourism
9.2.20	Accessible Tourism
9.2.21	Tourism Signage
9.3	Sub-County Tourism Development
9.3.1	Tourism in Ennis
9.3.2	Tourism in South Clare and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area
9.3.3	Tourism in East Clare
9.3.4	Tourism in North Clare and the Burren
9.3.5	Tourism in West Clare
9.3.6	Tourism and the Islands

9.0 Introduction

County Clare has an exceptionally rich and diverse natural and cultural heritage, vibrant towns and villages and contrasting landscapes, all of which are easily accessible to visitors. The diversity of its globally recognised landscapes is striking and the asset base for activity and nature-based tourism is considerable. County Clare is surrounded to the west, south and east by coastal, estuarine and freshwater systems which give the County a distinctive island-like geography that has in turn influenced its cultural heritage over the centuries. The tourism industry makes a significant contribution to the vitality and sustainability of a wide variety of local enterprises, particularly in rural areas, and promotes an enhanced awareness and positive appreciation of local traditions and ways of life. In 2019 tourism contributed €270 million to the economy of the county and it is estimated that it supported 6,600 jobs. While County Clare is one of the leading tourist counties in Ireland, a stronger year-round product must be developed. There is also a need to ensure that tourism growth is spread beyond established destinations and larger towns to rural areas.



The sustainable development of the tourism industry is critical to the economy of the County and of the wider region. Whilst the Covid-19 pandemic has brought significant challenges to the tourism industry in the county and whilst business uncertainty remains, it is envisaged that leisure travel will return to pre-Covid levels, and that the tourism industry will remain a key economic pillar for the County in the coming years. The reopening of County Clare as a tourist destination will be informed by the *County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030* and its *Destination Recovery and Strategy Action Plan* which is due to be completed in the next two years.

9.1 Strategic Aims

The objectives required to promote a sustainable, well-managed, and high-quality year-round tourism industry that generates economic benefits for all areas of the County are set out in this Chapter. In accordance with the overall vision of the Development Plan, these objectives are based on the following strategic aims:

- To maximise the potential of tourism as a ‘pillar of economic growth’ thereby contributing to the balanced economic development of the County and the tourism industry of the region;
- To work in partnership with Fáilte Ireland, Clare Tourism Advisory Forum and other bodies to define the tourist experience and to develop a clear tourism identity for County Clare;
- To develop and enhance new and existing tourism products, attractions and tourism infrastructure;
- To capitalise on the distinct tourist attractions that County Clare has to offer including natural, built and cultural heritage, scenic landscapes and natural amenities;
- To work to improve the visitor experience to ensure that all visitors to the County enjoy the unique experience of County Clare and all that it has to offer;
- To develop strong, year-round, high-quality integrated tourism products;
- To increase the length of tourist stay and ‘yield per visitor’ in the County;
- To capitalise on the county’s identified nodes along the Wild Atlantic Way;
- To protect the environmental quality of the county on which much of the tourism activity is based; and
- To enhance physical access and maximise the potential of underdeveloped areas for tourism.

9.2 Strategy

Many of Ireland’s most popular visitor attractions such as the Burren, the Cliffs of Moher, Loop Head, the Wild Atlantic Way, Lough Derg and Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) are located in County Clare. The strategy will be to develop and implement an integrated and sustainable high-quality, year-round tourism sector based on the county’s unique natural heritage, culture, music, traditions and an extensive array of both built and natural features and attractions.

Development Plan Objective: County Clare Tourism Strategy	
CDP9.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the implementation of the <i>County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030</i> which establishes a vision for the development of tourism in County Clare and provides for the sustainable and efficient provision and management of Clare's tourism resource.

9.2.1 Tourism Promotion

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the main focus for the initial phase of the Development Plan period will be on the domestic market, whilst in the medium term the promotion and branding of County Clare as a tourist destination, both nationally and internationally is key to the future success of the industry. The growth market visitor groups identified for County Clare are:

- Culturally Curious – visitors in this category are well travelled and want to discover the hidden stories and get under the skin of a destination, they are socially responsible, environmentally conscious and health conscious, and are independent sightseers who rarely travel in a family group.
- Great Escapers – visitors in this category are off-season travellers, independent, price and value conscious, they look for personal and trusted recommendations before purchasing and often travel as couples.
- Social Energisers – visitors in this category are early adopters and trend setters, those who don't want to miss out and are frequent users of digital technology and social media. They are travellers rather than tourists and travel in groups or couples.
- Connected Families – visitors in this category are families with young children (generally under 10), they book well in advance, are meticulous planners and are most likely to travel in July and August.
- Niche Markets – These markets include golf, wellness, geo/ecotourism, adventure sports, business, and the diaspora.

It is important to ensure that the wide array of activities and amenities available in the County are appropriately promoted to ensure the future growth and sustainable development of the tourism industry.

Development Plan Objective: Promotion of Tourism in County Clare	
CDP9.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support Clare Tourism Recovery Task Force in the reactivation of the County as a tourism destination and to support their ongoing work in promoting County Clare;</p> <p>b) To continue to work in partnership with local, national and international agencies/bodies to promote County Clare as a tourist destination;</p> <p>c) To support and encourage cohesion and linkages between the relevant agencies/bodies to implement the key tourism objectives in this Plan; and</p> <p>d) To support and facilitate community groups and tourism providers in accessing funding for appropriate and beneficial tourism developments.</p>

9.2.2 Integrated Tourism Products

The facilitation of access to services, attractions and amenities, the provision of high quality information to visitors (at tourist offices, online, or at accommodation facilities and attractions) and the further integration of tourism products (that is greater cohesion and linkages between tourism-based activities and businesses) are required to encourage tourists to stay for longer in the county to visit a wider array of attractions and engage in more activities whilst here. These actions will assist in generating greater economic benefits from the tourism sector in the county.

Development Plan Objective: Integrated Tourism Products	
CDP9.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to achieve an integrated and co-ordinated tourism product. Particular emphasis will be placed on the integration of tourism attractions with accommodation and tourist services in the wider community including those located in nearby town and village centres; b) To support and encourage the creation of linkages between tourism activities and businesses in key areas; c) To ensure a well-signed and interpreted heritage and landscape; d) To improve connectivity to those areas that are difficult to access through the sustainable development of the road network and public transport services, and facilities for improved visitor access and longer dwell times; and e) To support sustainable travel in the tourism sector by the promotion of public transport use and by undertaking enhancements to overall accessibility.

9.2.3 Tourism Developments and Tourist Facilities

It is recognised that infrastructure development must meet the needs of both the resident and visitor populations in order to ensure that County Clare continues to be a high-quality place in which to live, work and visit. A wide range of facilities are required to support the tourism industry and to attract visitors to the county. Many of these facilities can also be used by local residents. These include visitor attractions/interpretive centres, wellness and self-development facilities, equestrian, water-sports and outdoor adventure activities, facilities for boat rental and inland cruising, golfing and family amenities such as playgrounds and woodland walks. In addition, long-term projects such as the Wild Atlantic Way are essential to the economic growth derived from the tourism offering in the county. The Council will promote the development of tourism in a manner that is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the environment.

Development Plan Objective: Tourist Developments and Tourist Facilities	
CDP9.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To permit tourism-related developments and facilities inside existing settlements where the scale and size of the proposed development is appropriate and in keeping with the character of the settlement, subject to normal site suitability considerations; b) To permit tourism-related developments outside of settlements where there is a clear need for the specific location and the benefits to the local community are balanced with any potential environmental impact; c) To ensure that development of new or enhanced tourism infrastructure and facilities include an assessment of the environmental sensitivities of the area including an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) if required in order to avoid adverse impacts on the receiving environment; and d) To work with the relevant authorities to develop specific monitoring protocols for visitor pressure on the county's natural, archaeological and built heritage asset and to ensure that tourism activities are maintained within sustainable limits for the European sites in the county.

9.2.4 Visitor Accommodation

To encourage tourists to visit Clare and to stay for longer periods, it is necessary to maintain, improve and increase the provision of good quality visitor accommodation in the County. The availability of a wide range of accommodation options is required to ensure that County Clare is an attractive and convenient tourism location for different categories of tourist. In this regard it is an objective of the Development Plan that new tourist accommodation is located in towns and villages and in close proximity to services and amenities. However, it is recognised that some forms of tourism developments, due to their scale or nature, may require a location outside of settlements. Such developments may include international-scale, integrated tourism developments such as golf courses. The requirements for such developments to locate outside of an established settlement will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to their nature, scale, site suitability and normal planning considerations.

Development Plan Objective: Visitor Accommodation	
CDP9.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To promote, encourage and facilitate the provision of new visitor accommodation and the expansion/upgrade of existing hotels, guesthouses, B&Bs and other tourist accommodation at appropriate locations throughout the County, particularly in areas with existing services;</p> <p>b) To support the redevelopment of brownfield sites, both in settlements and in rural areas, for the provision of tourist accommodation; and</p> <p>c) To support the development of new camping and glamping facilities and facilities for campervans/motor homes/touring caravans both within settlements and in rural locations at a variety of locations across the County. Sites in rural locations should be located in close proximity to, and have good connectivity to, existing tourism assets.</p> <p>(d) To support the development of overnight accommodation in the County ensuring existing visitor attractions deliver, as far as practicable, the aims of 'Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2014-2022' and the 'Town Centre First Policy'.</p>

9.2.5 Wild Atlantic Way

The Wild Atlantic Way is the longest defined coastal touring route in the world, stretching 2,600km from the Inishowen Peninsula in County Donegal to the town of Kinsale in County Cork and the overall objective for this long-distance route is to increase the economic contribution of tourism to the coastal counties in the west of Ireland by increasing international bed nights and revenue and by sustaining and creating employment. The route of the Wild Atlantic Way, as it passes through County Clare, is shown on the Core Strategy Map 3A in Chapter 3 of this Plan.

Loop Head and the Cliffs of Moher are designated as 'Signature Points' along the Wild Atlantic Way and in total there are seventeen 'Discovery Points' in the County. To ensure that increased and sustained numbers of visitors are derived from the Wild Atlantic Way route and that these visitor numbers benefit the local communities these points need to be appropriately managed and ease of access to the route must be facilitated.



The central location of County Clare along the Wild Atlantic Way is playing a significant role in raising the profile and visitor numbers along the Clare coastline. Fáilte Ireland is developing and implementing a series of visitor experience

development plans that aim to extend the length of stay and increase the visitor expenditure within the area, and this will be informed by the *Burren and Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan*. In addition, Clare County Council is developing the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 to be implemented as part of the overall development and management of the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience.

Once travelling the route, visitors are encouraged to further explore and engage with tourism experiences and communities in the wider geographic area. In this regard there are numerous towns and villages located close to the Wild Atlantic Way and it is important that visitors are aware of these 'Secrets of the Wild Atlantic Way'. Clear signage is required at optimum locations to raise awareness of the amenities and services available in these areas to increase visitor numbers in the adjacent settlements.

9.2.6 Shannon Estuary Way

The Shannon Estuary Way was launched in 2019 following a community-led project supported by Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Clare Local Development Company, West Limerick Resources and Fáilte Ireland. with the aim of making the Estuary a key tourist attraction for the Mid-West. The strategy aims to increase visitor dwell times and spend in the local communities along the 207km Estuary route and to achieve synergies with the Wild Atlantic Way. Clare County Council will work with stakeholders and community groups to gain greater benefit from the further sustainable development of this driving route.

9.2.7 Ireland's Hidden Heartlands

The experience proposition Ireland's Hidden Heartlands comprises areas within 9 counties including East Clare and has the potential to become a significant catalyst for new growth and development of rural recreation and water-based tourism in this part of the County. Work is progressing on unlocking the potential of this extended region through two transformational projects which are designed to capitalise on the growth in 'slow tourism'. These are the Beara Breifne Way and the development of the River Shannon and the lakes as a long-distance corridor for water-based activity. In addition, the development of a visitor facility in Mountshannon as part of the Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan will add to the tourism offering in East Clare and the wider Ireland's Hidden Heartland area. Clare County Council has received funding of almost €4 million through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) for the development of a gateway visitor facility in Mountshannon as part of the Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan. The area of County Clare included in Ireland's Hidden Heartlands is shown on Map 9A Tourism Corridors at the end of this chapter.

The *Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020 – 2030* prepared by Waterways Ireland, in association with Fáilte Ireland and the Local Authorities along the River, sets out an integrated framework for sustainable tourism development along the River Shannon and seeks to reposition the combined Shannon Navigation and Shannon-erne Waterway (collectively referred to as 'The Shannon') as a key tourism destination within Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

**Development Plan Objective:
Tourism Corridors**

CDP9.6

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to ensure the sustainable improvement and expansion of tourist services, infrastructure, visitor management and interpretative information and transport networks and amenities for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, the Shannon Estuary Way, at the identified Wild Atlantic Way Signature Points and Discovery Points as well as at appropriate locations along this route, and for all of the key tourism corridors in the County subject to robust feasibility studies to reduce impacts on the environment and to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes;
- b) To provide coordinated signage, navigational aids (including digital apps) and information on surrounding services, amenities and activities at key points along County Clare's tourism corridors to raise awareness of services and amenities available in close proximity to these routes, to enhance the overall visitor experience, and to ensure that businesses in the wider area benefit from the increased visitor numbers;
- c) To develop the potential of Loop Head as a key destination on the Wild Atlantic Way and Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) as a key destination for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands;
- d) To develop the potential of the Cliffs of Moher as a key destination on the Wild Atlantic Way by supporting and facilitating the delivery and implementation of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 in line with the findings of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy Environmental Assessments.
- e) To work with Fáilte Ireland and other key stakeholders to ensure the sustainable delivery of the *Tourism Masterplan for the River Shannon 2020 - 2030*;
- f) To work to develop linkages between the tourism corridors in the County and to the Key Town of Ennis which acts as a tourism hub for the County;
- g) To support and facilitate the preparation and delivery of the *Doolin Pier Masterplan* and a visitor services centre at Doolin Pier during the lifetime of this Plan; and
- h) To implement the mitigation measures and recommendations as they apply to the County, in particular for the Cliffs of Moher and Loop Head arising from the Wild Atlantic Way Operational Monitoring Programmes.

	<p>i) To work with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders to support the successful implementation and delivery of Wild Atlantic Way Tourism Plans.</p> <p>j) To work with Fáilte Ireland and other key stakeholders to ensure the successful implementation and delivery of Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan 2020-2024.</p>
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9.2.8 Business Tourism

The further development of the conference and event market is a focus of the County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030 and also the Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy. The County is well located to benefit from this growing market due to the excellent national connectivity via the motorway and public transport networks and international connectivity via Shannon International Airport. The Council will continue to work with hotels that offer conference facilities so that opportunities to partake in this growing market are maximised. In particular the development of an internationally-branded hotel chain with large meeting and convention facilities in Ennis is supported.

The combined business and leisure sector ‘Bleisure’ where professionals are increasingly adding extra leisure days onto a business trip has the potential to bring significant additional revenue to the local area. It is important to ensure that conference and business tourism facilities are integrated with other areas of the tourist economy such as through promotion of local activities and attractions on hotel websites.

Development Plan Objective: Business Tourism	
CDP9.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To promote, encourage and facilitate the provision of new conference facilities and the expansion/upgrade of existing conference facilities throughout the County at appropriate locations and in full compliance with all relevant environmental legislation in particular the requirements of the Habitats Directive;</p> <p>b) To support the work of the Shannon Region Conference and Sports Bureau;</p> <p>c) To encourage the development of a new internationally-branded hotel and convention facility in Ennis to enhance the tourism product; and</p> <p>d) To support and encourage the marketing of County Clare as a conference location at national and international levels.</p>

9.2.9 Activity and Adventure Tourism

Participation in adventure activities is becoming increasingly popular amongst both national and international visitors. This includes very popular activities such as walking and cycling and

other activities like angling, golf, equestrian pursuits, kayaking, canoeing and surfing. County Clare is ideally placed to capitalise on this growing demand for experiential holidays. Its varied landscape, for example, offers opportunities for an expansive range of activities such as water sports, hill walking and orienteering and dolphin watching amongst many others. Significant potential exists to further develop these forms of tourism in a sustainable manner.



**Development Plan Objective:
Activity and Adventure Tourism**

CDP9.8

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To work with local communities and relevant agencies to achieve the sustainable development of County Clare as a world-class destination for sports and recreation-related tourism development;
- b) To support the development of low-impact experiential tourism in order to diversify the range of tourist activities available in the county at appropriate locations, subject to an analysis of their potential environmental impact and in order to expand the tourist season;
- c) To support the sustainable development of water sports, surfing, sailing and water-related events at appropriate locations in the county, subject to analysis of their potential environmental impact;
- d) To sustainably develop greenways, blueways and peatways and walking and cycling trails including the West Clare Railway Greenway to achieve greater accessibility to the countryside and the marine environment by sustainable modes and to achieve maximum benefit and connectivity at the local, regional and national levels;
- e) To promote activity tourism subject to appropriate site selection and environmental assessment processes; and

	<p>f) To ensure that development of new or enhanced tourism infrastructure and facilities includes an assessment of the environmental sensitivities of the area including and Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA); Appropriate Assessment (AA) and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) if required in order to avoid adverse impacts on the receiving environment.</p> <p>g) To ensure the siting of Blue and Green Infrastructure is carefully considered in the context of climate change resilience and flood protection.</p>
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9.2.10 Educational Tourism

The county is a highly attractive location for educational tourism and there are opportunities for the further expansion of this growing sector. Large numbers of visitors travel to County Clare every year to study its geology, natural heritage, coastal environments and its cultural and built heritage.

The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark attracts a large number of visitors for educational purposes each year. Potential also exists to expand Clare’s educational tourism based on geological education in the Kilkee/Loop Head areas, maritime/marine renewable energy education in the Doonbeg area, and marine science, renewable energy and climate change research and training at Kilrush.

Development Plan Objective: Educational Tourism	
CDP9.9	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the promotion and expansion of the educational tourism sector in County Clare.

9.2.11 Rural Tourism and Forestry Tourism

Tourism can supplement or provide an alternative to farm-based incomes and plays a significant role in the diversification of the rural economy and in sustaining rural communities. Forested areas and rural areas are increasingly used for recreational activities such as walking, running, bird-watching and mountain-biking and many trails and amenities for such activities have been developed. There is an extensive range of public forest areas in County Clare such as the John O’Sullivan Park, Cratloe Woods and Vandeleur Walking Trail which make an important contribution to the tourism and recreational offering in the County. In tandem with the growth in rural tourism there is a growth in the demand for forest-based accommodation and emerging camping models such as Scandinavian-style cabins/chalets, tree top houses and ‘glamping’ pods alongside adventure centres and hubs. Such development proposals will be assessed on a case-by-case basis having regard to their nature, scale, site suitability and normal planning considerations.

Development Plan Objective: Rural Tourism and Forestry Tourism	
CDP9.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To promote and facilitate the development of rural tourism such as open farms, on-farm craft centres and visitor centres where the development will not have a negative impact on the character, scenic value or rural amenity of the surrounding area and subject to normal planning and environmental requirements; b) To promote the provision of on-farm tourism enterprises such as the renovation of buildings for tourism purposes, angling, pony-trekking and other similar activities, subject to compliance with normal planning and environmental requirements; and c) To work in collaboration with Coillte, private forestry owners, community organisations and other interested parties to develop new forest accommodation, access, signage and trails for walking, cycling, mountain-biking and horse-riding (bridle paths).

9.2.12 Arts, Crafts and Food Tourism

County Clare is a renowned centre for arts, crafts and artisan food production and is ideally placed to promote these enterprises as part of the County’s tourism offer. This has also been supplemented in recent years with the establishment of a number of craft breweries and local distilleries which attract many visitors each year. There is also the potential for the development of craft trails and craftsman experiences in the County.



Development Plan Objective: Arts, Crafts and Food Tourism	
CDP9.11	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the development of the arts, crafts and food tourism sectors and work in coordination with relevant stakeholders to facilitate growth in these sectors.

9.2.13 Coastal Tourism

The attractive sandy beaches of County Clare are a major tourist attraction and Clare currently boasts nine Blue Flag Beaches. With the growth in outdoor activities, these beaches are used for water sports such as surfing, kite-surfing, swimming, paddle boarding and kayaking as well as other activities such as walking, jogging and general enjoyment of the coastal area. The protection and management of the coastline is imperative to ensure ongoing sustainable benefits from tourism activities that are based on these enviable natural assets.

Development Plan Objective: Coastal Tourism	
CDP9.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To encourage the development of coastal tourism such as water-sports and water-related activities subject to normal planning and environmental criteria; b) To support proposals for tourism development in coastal areas where it can be demonstrated that there will be no negative impacts on the amenities of the area the integrity of the natural environment or the economic value of the County's coastline and beaches; and c) To continue to work with An Taisce, the local community and other relevant stakeholders to retain and increase the number of Blue Flag awards in the County.

9.2.14 Lakeland and Waterway Tourism

The lakelands and waterways of County Clare are rich natural resources that attract many visitors to the County each year. In addition to their scenic beauty they offer opportunities for a wide range of activities such as fishing, sailing, bird-watching and pleasure boating. Ensuring access to the lakes and waterways and the sustainable management of activities taking place on the water, on the lakeshore and in the riparian zones of waterways is essential to ensure a balance between tourism development and conservation of the natural heritage in these areas. The Ireland's Hidden Heartlands initiative will assist in delivering on the potential of the lakes and waterways of East Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Lakeland and Waterway Tourism	
CDP9.13	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the development of tourism activities in lakeland areas and along waterways subject to normal planning and environmental requirements. All proposed developments shall be in accordance the Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive and all other relevant EC Directives.</p> <p>b) To encourage the development of shared facilities centres, at inland water bodies including Ballycuggeran Sports Activity Facility, Ogonnelloe, Killaloe, Lough Derg and the River Shannon, to facilitate greater access to water for areas such as water sports and water-based activities and events subject to normal planning and environmental criteria.</p>

9.2.15 Urban Tourism

Tourism has a strong positive impact on the vibrancy of rural towns and villages and these settlements provide a range of visitor attractions, facilities and services to support the tourism industry and drive revenue generation in the County. Many towns and villages in County Clare are tourist destinations in their own right with Ennis in particular also acting as a tourism hub for the wider County and region. The development of vibrant, welcoming town and village centres is important as this broadens their appeal and also encourages repeat and extended stays. There is the potential to further expand the provision of high quality accommodation and secondary facilities such as restaurants, cafes, pubs, craft outlets and other leisure facilities in Clare’s towns and villages for the betterment of both local residents and visitors alike.

Development Plan Objective: Development Plan Objective: Urban Tourism	
CDP9.14	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To improve the visual appearance of towns and villages, protect their character and maximise their tourism potential by the continuation of environmental and public realm programmes, design management and improvement of identified derelict sites.</p>

9.2.16 Festivals and Events

Festivals can be a key driver of local economies and a means of revitalising and maintaining local culture. For example, Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann, held in Ennis in 2016 and 2017, provided a significant boost to the tourism industry in the County and contributed to Clare’s

reputation as a ‘County of Culture’ on an international scale. Festivals are also important in terms of attracting visitors to the County during the off-peak season. Clare has a long history of hospitality and has historically hosted over 150 festivals and events annually including the Tour de Burren, the Willie Clancy Summer School, the Doolin Folk Festival, Fleadh Nua and the Feakle Traditional Music Festival.

Development Plan Objective: Festivals and Events	
CDP9.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support and promote the existing festivals and cultural events which take place in the County and to facilitate the establishment of new events; b) To promote County Clare as a ‘County of Culture’; c) To support community groups and festival committees to identify and access new sources of funding for festivals and events in the County; and d) To promote the development of a variety of new festivals and sporting events to appeal to a wide range of visitors and to increase the profile of the County as a key tourism destination.

9.2.17 Heritage and Cultural Tourism

The *County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030* identifies culturally curious tourists as one of the key markets for the County. The County has an extremely rich and varied culture and heritage, and this culturally curious market can provide an additional opportunity to increase the length of time visitors stay in the County, as well as reinforcing Clare’s cultural identity by creating revenue to conserve its built heritage and support its cultural heritage.

Genealogy and genealogical resources also play an important role in heritage and cultural tourism. The Local Studies Centre in Ennis plays a leading role in supporting genealogical research in the County.

Development Plan Objective: Heritage and Cultural Tourism	
CDP9.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To work with stakeholders including the Office of Public Works, the Heritage Council, the Arts Council, National Monuments Service (DHLGH) local communities and businesses to support the development of heritage and cultural tourism in County Clare.</p>

9.2.18 Sustainable and Responsible Tourism

The NPF and RSES for the Southern Region recognise that in order to develop a sustainable tourism industry in Ireland, infrastructural investment is required to enhance amenities including the built, cultural and natural heritage assets in both urban and rural areas. Investment in developing a well-designed public realm in settlements, recreational infrastructure and rural amenities including activity-based tourism and trails, such as greenways and blueways will significantly contribute to the sustainable growth of the tourism sector. County Clare is well positioned to progress sustainable and responsible tourism initiatives. Sustainable transport initiatives could include e-charging, specific parking allocations for electric vehicles, restricted access in certain areas to sustainable modes of transport, reduced parking charges at publicly owned sites for low carbon, carbon neutral transport modes, provision of better and safer cycle lanes along many of the transit routes and access routes particularly between tourism towns, villages and attractions. Private tourism operators and groups such as the Burren Eco-Tourism Network are already doing significant work to progress these aspects of tourism development. In accordance with the requirements of the RSES for the Southern Region specific monitoring protocols for visitor pressure are required to ensure that tourism activities are maintained within sustainable limits.

Development Plan Objective: Sustainable and Responsible Tourism	
CDP9.17	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support sustainable and responsible tourism initiatives across County Clare in order to ensure that on-going growth in the tourism industry is balanced with the long term protection of the natural environment and cultural identity of the County.

9.2.19 Niche Tourism

The *County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030* identifies a number of significant niche markets which have the potential to expand the tourist season and attract additional visitors to the County. These markets include the higher end golf market, wellness, geo/ecotourism, adventure sports, business, and the diaspora. The Strategy supports the implementation of the *Ennis Niche Destination Town Plan*. The potential of niche markets to contribute to the County's evolving tourist industry is recognised and in collaboration with the tourist sectors and the wider community the Council will identify and target these niches.

Development Plan Objective: Niche Tourism	
CDP9.18	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To explore the expansion of the niche tourism industry in County Clare in order to expand the range of tourism products on offer.

9.2.20 Accessible Tourism

To ensure that visitors can enjoy the amenities and services available in County Clare it is essential that visitor facilities and attractions are accessible to all, regardless of abilities, age or physical limitations.

Development Plan Objective: Accessible Tourism	
CDP9.19	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate and support the provision of improved accessibility at visitor accommodation, venues and activities including access to water-based activities, and to ensure that the principles of universal design are integrated into proposals for future tourism developments in the County; and b) To collaborate and work with relevant agencies and the hospitality sector to ensure that Ennis and County Clare are age-friendly tourist destinations.

9.2.21 Tourism Signage

Appropriate way marking signage is required to assist visitors to navigate the County and to provide visibility of local businesses. A balance is required between these requirements and the protection of visual amenities. Therefore to avoid excessive concentrations of signs at key points within the County it is important to prepare and implement signage plans for these areas. Such plans have been prepared for the Lough Derg and Burren areas and it is intended to prepare similar plans for the Ennis and Loop Head areas.

Development Plan Objective: Signage Management	
CDP9.20	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To implement the signage plans that have been prepared for the Lough Derg and Burren areas; b) To prepare and implement signage plans for the Ennis and Loop Head areas; and c) To support the provision of accurate and easy-to-use roadside information including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Integrated signage plans throughout the County to improve navigation and visual impact; and ii) The development of a digital platform to disseminate information to visitors; and d) To ensure that all plans will undergo screening for Appropriate Assessment to address the potential effects on European sites as a result of increased visitor numbers.

9.3 Sub-County Tourism Development

In order for County Clare to maximise its tourism potential, this Plan sets out a number of objectives for tourism development for specific areas of the County to ensure a targeted ‘niche’ approach to tourism development in each area.

9.3.1 Tourism in Ennis

Ennis, as the County Town, is a tourist destination in its own right and also acts as a tourist hub for the extensive activities available in the wider County and region. Its close proximity to Shannon International Airport, motorway and national road networks, rail and bus links, and its variety of accommodation options, amenities and activities makes Ennis attractive to visitors.

The *Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Plan* and the *County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030* propose the strengthening the tourism role of Ennis as both a core hub attraction in its own right and as a ‘Gateway’ to the County. To achieve this it is necessary to further develop and diversify the tourism product in Ennis through actions such as the development of additional higher-rated hotel rooms and quality self-catering options, working with tour operators to position Ennis as a key hub from which to explore Clare, leveraging the unofficial positioning of Ennis as ‘Ireland’s Trad Town’, supporting new festivals such as the Clare Food and Drink Fleadh and also by supporting the forthcoming *Ennis Niche Destination Town Plan*. See Ennis and Environs Settlement Plan (Volume 3(a) of this Plan) for further information and detailed objectives relating to tourism in Ennis.



Development Plan Objective: Tourism in Ennis and its Environs	
CDP9.21	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To promote Ennis as both a tourist destination and as a tourism hub for the wider tourism product in County Clare; b) To facilitate the expansion of tourism infrastructure, facilities and entertainment in the Ennis and Environs area; c) To expand the nature and extent of tourist accommodation in the Ennis and Environs area, including camping, glamping and motor home facilities; d) To support the development of Ennis and its environs as a hub for cycleways, greenways and eco-tourism; and e) To support the Promote Ennis initiative and Purple Flag accreditation, and any subsequent initiatives for the promotion/development of Ennis as a tourist destination.

9.3.2 Tourism in South Clare and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area

South Clare is close to Shannon International Airport, the motorway network and rail terminals. An objective for this area is to maximise its potential by exploiting this high-quality connectivity and the existing tourist and heritage assets in the area. In this regard, the Council is currently engaged with Shannon Airport Group to ensure continued investment in the enhancement and expansion of facilities and services at Bunratty Castle and Folk Park including the potential transfer of the Shannon Heritage Site to Clare County Council. In addition, as the proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) moves forward, the Council will identify partners with a strong interest in new technologies and innovative digital solutions to improve tourism services and experiences and will work with these partners to explore options for enhancing Clare’s profile as a smart tourism destination.

Development Plan Objective: Tourism in South Clare and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area	
CDP9.22	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support investment in infrastructure, increased capacity of Shannon International Airport, road and rail accessibility, in order to maximise the potential of tourism subject to the outcome of environmental assessments and the planning process; b) To support the enhancement of Bunratty Castle and Folk Park as a visitor experience; c) To support the development of a flagship, international-scale tourism project in Bunratty;

	<p>d) To facilitate the development and expansion of the hospitality sector, particularly as it relates to business tourism, in Bunratty and Shannon Town;</p> <p>e) To support the development of Shannon as a visitor destination including enhanced evening entertainment, promotion of looped walking trails, provision of an airport museum and enhanced aircraft viewing areas;</p> <p>f) To work with relevant stakeholders to promote the monastic sites in the area as key tourist attractions;</p> <p>g) To promote equestrian, boating, outdoor activities and the natural amenities and traditions of the area; and</p> <p>h) To support the development of the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as a smart tourism destination.</p>
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9.3.3 Tourism in East Clare

East Clare has a diverse range of tourism resources, especially along the shores of Lough Derg and the Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands experience proposition and the *Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020–2030* have the potential to be significant catalysts for new growth and development in the area. The *County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030* outlines the fragmentation within the tourism industry with a particularly strong sense of the disconnect between East Clare and the western and northern areas of the county. The Council will seek to address this issue and also to ensure that East Clare reaches its full potential through initiatives such as the development of a gateway visitor facility in Mountshannon as part of the *Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan* for which Clare County Council has received funding of almost €4 million through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and the promotion of the ‘High Towers and High Powers’ theme.

Opportunities exist to further develop the East Clare area, by promoting and encouraging niche tourism products such as the Mountshannon Bird Viewing Information Point, facilities for water-sports and outdoor activity centres, wellness and self-development facilities, spa and health facilities and agri-tourism. The area of County Clare included in Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands is shown on Map 9A Tourism Corridors at the end of this chapter.



**Development Plan Objective:
Tourism in East Clare**

CDP9.23

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To support East Clare as a tourism destination and promote the tourism assets of the area including Ireland's Lakelands, greenways, blueways, the Munster Vales, Brú na Bóinne and the Ireland's Hidden Heartlands tourism experience;
- b) To work with relevant stakeholders to implement the *Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan* including the development of an associated visitor centre in Mountshannon;
- c) To promote the Lough Derg (on the Shannon) Heritage and Nature Trail, the work of the Lough Derg Marketing Strategy Group and other future initiatives that enhance established attractions and work to promote Lough Derg and the surrounding area as a tourism destination;
- d) To facilitate sustainable marina developments and associated amenities at appropriate locations inside and outside of settlements along Lough Derg and other lake areas;
- e) To develop and enhance tourism products, in particular sustainable and eco-tourism;
- f) To facilitate and encourage the development of new and expanded outdoor activities in East Clare such as canoeing, water sports, bird watching, mountain-biking and walking trails and to develop links to complementary facilities;

- g) To promote Lough Derg and the Slieve Aughty region as a tourism location and to develop a series of viewing points in the area;
- h) To promote wellness and self-development facilities; spa and health complexes and agri-tourism enterprises;
- i) To support the upgrade of the amenity facilities in the Ballycuggaran area;
- j) To facilitate the investigation of historical sites in East Clare containing the remains of a complex of blast furnaces and iron foundries;
- k) To support the development of a footpath/walking route around Lough Derg, linking Killaloe to Tuamgraney and Mountshannon;
- l) To promote the implementation of the *Tourism Masterplan for the Shannon 2020–2030*.
- m) To encourage the development of additional visitor accommodation and food and beverage offering in East Clare.
- n) To support the identification of potential upgrades or new public transport routes and greenways to encourage sustainable tourism options for visitors to East Clare.

9.3.4 Tourism in North Clare and the Burren

North Clare is well-located in terms of tourism and has a diverse range of tourism resources, especially the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark, the Atlantic coastline and the route of the Wild Atlantic Way. The Geopark supports greater interpretation of the geological landscape, climate change awareness and the achievement of sustainable tourism and land-use. It also works towards scientifically sound and sustainable visitor management and monitoring practices at key natural sites and cultural monuments in the Burren.

Whilst tourism is well established in the area the potential exists to encourage a larger proportion of tourism traffic to stop in the North Clare area for longer periods of time to avail of the numerous rural and town-based visitor attractions. Key to this is the newly launched Burren Discovery Trail, identified as a catalyst project in Fáilte Ireland's Burren & Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan, it was developed by Clare and Galway County Councils in partnership with Fáilte Ireland. The trail is a 95km new looped route off the Wild Atlantic Way designed to encourage visitors to explore more and stay longer in the Burren, taking visitors through the Burren Highlands in County Clare and Lowlands in County Galway offering opportunities to engage with the stories of each local area and explore the many wonderful towns and villages in the region. Clare County Council will work with stakeholders and community groups to gain greater benefit from the further sustainable development of this driving route. The Burren Eco Tourism Network has won a Lonely Planet award in its 'Best in Travel' picks for 2021 and the Cliffs of Moher is a multiple times winner of the CIE Award of Excellence which further boosts the reputation of North Clare as a tourist destination. Future development at the Cliffs of Moher will be informed by the *Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040*.



Development Plan Objective: Tourism in North Clare and The Burren	
CDP9.24	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To maintain and enhance the Cliffs of Moher as one of Ireland's premier tourist attractions and harness its potential as a driver of tourism in County Clare through the implementation of the <i>Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040</i> in accordance with the recommendations and mitigation measures as outlined in the accompanying SEA Environmental Report and Natura Impact Report; b) To support Park and Ride sites at appropriate locations which provide for visitor parking associated with the Cliffs of Moher and in line with the findings of the CoM 2040 Strategy including the associated Environmental Assessments; c) To enhance and promote established attractions in the towns and villages of North Clare and the surrounding hinterland; d) To consolidate and improve the Burren as a vibrant, sustainable, world-class destination in order to retain its UNESCO Global Geopark status;

- e) To promote the development of ecotourism and agri-tourism and support the work of the Burren Ecotourism Network;
- f) To develop a year-round sustainable tourism product by ensuring linkages to other tourist products in the area;
- g) To support and promote, with the co-operation of private landowners, public access and interpretive signage at heritage sites and areas of geological interest where appropriate;
- h) To maximise the opportunities and benefits of natural amenities such as the Atlantic Ocean and the Burren and to enhance and manage outdoor activity and specialised tourist products such as surfing, rock climbing and water-sports activities;
- i) To work with key stakeholders such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service to promote tourism initiatives and sustainable visitor access and management within the Burren including the park and ride service operating from Corofin;
- j) To deliver an Enhancement Strategy for Corofin which will provide for an integrated tourism experience associated with the Burren within the lifetime of the Plan;
- k) To work with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to promote and develop sustainable visitor management initiatives to service the Burren National Park to include a new tourist visitor centre in Corofin;
- l) To work with Fáilte Ireland and other tourism stakeholders to support the successful implementation and delivery of the Burren & Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP), and
- m) To recognise tourism as a regeneration tool for towns and villages within the Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark. The implementation of the Clare Tourism Strategy and investment in towns and villages will be key to their regeneration.

9.3.5 Tourism in West Clare

West Clare has a diverse range of tourism resources such as the Loop Head Peninsula, the Shannon Estuary and islands, the route of the Wild Atlantic Way, Vandeleur Estate, hotels, golf courses, numerous amenities and a unique culture and landscape. However, tourism remains relatively underdeveloped in the area, mainly due to its peripheral location. Significant potential exists to further promote key settlements



such as Doonbeg, Kilrush, Kilkee and Miltown Malbay from a tourism perspective, building on the existing amenities and events in these areas. The geography of the area and its coastal location are ideal to underpin further tourism development, particularly for marine, environmental, geological, educational, outdoor activities and ornithological offerings. The further development of visitor facilities on Loop Head including recreational looped trails and park and ride facilities for the headland are supported by the Council.

**Development Plan Objective:
Tourism in West Clare**

CDP9.25

It is an Objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to further develop and enhance the opportunity for tourism products in particular coastal and cliff walks in the Kilkee and Loop Head areas, cycling and niche tourism;
- b) To promote and market the area, building on the cultural amenities and entertainment facilities of Kilrush, Kilkee, and Doonbeg;
- c) To further develop Kilrush as a recognised destination for marine-based recreation;
- d) To support the promotion of the Loop Head Peninsula as a tourist destination and the enhancement of visitor facilities including upgraded visitor experience facilities at the Loop Head Lighthouse, park and ride facilities and looped trails;
- e) To encourage the development of sustainable tourism at the Bridges of Ross;
- f) To further promote Vandeleur Gardens and Scatterry Island as key tourist attractions in the Kilrush area;
- g) To support the enhancement of the tourist accommodation offer in West Clare;

	<p>h) To maximise the opportunities of the area’s coastal location and availability of fresh local produce to develop, facilitate and expand the local food and hospitality tourist product;</p> <p>i) To develop and enhance the piers, harbours and slipways along the Shannon Estuary, in accordance with the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan</i> for the area, to maximise their potential for water sports activities;</p> <p>j) To promote and further develop the Shannon Estuary Way and the Wild Atlantic Way;</p> <p>k) To work with Fáilte Ireland in the preparation and implementation of the Cliff Coast Destination Experience Development Plan.</p>
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Development Plan Objective: West Clare Railway	
CDP9.26	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>In addition to the development of it as a greenway, potential to facilitate the reopening of appropriate sections of the West Clare Railway as an operational tourist attraction by permitting where appropriate new sections of railway to be built as alternatives to parts of the line which have been built on or are inaccessible since its closure.</p>

9.3.6 Tourism and the Islands

There are numerous islands in the coastal, estuarine and inland water bodies around County Clare that have significant potential for further tourism development. Scatterry Island, located in close proximity to the Heritage Town of Kilrush and a Discovery Point on the Wild Atlantic Way, has seen significant increases in tourists visiting the island in recent years with the establishment of a boat tour service. Scatterry Island Tours have been awarded two EDEN (European Destination of Excellence) Awards with regard to this service. It is important that the increased levels of tourism and educational field trips are carefully managed to ensure the protection of the heritage of the island. The other islands in the Shannon Estuary are currently under-utilised from a tourism perspective, an issue which has been addressed in the *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary*. The *SIFP* identifies the potential of the islands for the development of eco-tourism and heritage-based tourism and recommends a further evaluation of their potential.

Clare County Council’s acquisition of Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) on Lough Derg and the preparation and implementation of the *Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan* offers a major opportunity to grow the tourism industry and encourage visitors to East Clare. The island is highly important from both an environmental and historic perspective and careful and sustainable management is required to ensure its on-going conservation.

Development Plan Objective: Tourism and the Islands	
CDP9.27	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To identify the tourism function of the county’s islands and address the functional, planning and environmental impacts of additional visitors in order to facilitate increased access to the islands in a sensitive and appropriate manner; b) To support and promote the Scattery Island Ferry Service and to support the provision of signage associated with this service; c) To ensure the on-going sustainable management of the historic and natural resources of Scattery Island and support tourism product development on the Island; d) To facilitate the further exploration of the tourism/leisure potential of the Shannon Estuary Islands having regard to the landscape/heritage sensitivities of the area and the European and local designations in the Estuary; and e) To promote the sustainable tourism development and management of Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) as part of the overall <i>Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan</i>.

-  **Hidden Heartlands**
- Roads**
-  **National Primary**
-  **National Secondary**
-  **Motorway**
-  **Wild Atlantic Way**
-  **Shannon Estuary Way**



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Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Map 9A Tourism Corridors



Date: April 2023 Scale: Not To Scale

Chapter 10 Sustainable Communities

Goal X: A county where healthy and sustainable communities are developed and integrated with the timely delivery of a wide range of community, educational and cultural facilities and where, through a commitment to equality, participation, accessibility and social inclusion, the County develops as a unique location with an enhanced quality of life for its citizens and visitors.

Chapter 10 Table of Contents:

10.0	Introduction
10.1	Strategic Aims
10.2	Sustainable and Inclusive Communities
10.3	Local Community Development Committee
10.4	Social and Community Engagement
10.5	Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society
10.6	Universal Accessibility
10.7	Age-Friendly County
10.7.1	Ageing in Place
10.8	Community Facilities
10.9	Community Gardens and Allotments
10.10	Social Infrastructure
10.11	Arts, Culture and Language
10.12	Physical Recreation and Active Living
10.13	Recreational Routes
10.14	Countryside Recreation
10.15	Public Rights of Way
10.16	Play Facilities
10.17	Educational Services
10.17.1	Pre-School/Childcare Facilities
10.17.2	Primary and Secondary School Facilities
10.17.3	Third Level and Higher Education
10.17.4	Further Education and Lifelong Learning
10.18	Dual Use of Community Facilities
10.19	Digital Hubs
10.20	Healthcare and Wellbeing
10.20.1	Air Ambulance Facilities
10.21	The Library Service
10.22	Burial Grounds and Crematoria

10.0 Introduction

Sustainable communities that are vibrant, healthy, accessible and inclusive, and which are served by social and community services and facilities are of fundamental importance to the achievement of a high quality of life in the County and in ensuring that Clare is an attractive place to visit, invest and work. This Chapter presents the strategic aims and objectives required to support community development, enhance social infrastructure, promote social inclusion and support physical, social and cultural integration as well as addressing deficits in social, community and physical infrastructure.

10.1 Strategic Aims

The strategic aims of this Chapter are:

- To promote, encourage and facilitate physical, social and cultural inclusion throughout the County and across all communities;
- To ensure that the principles of accessible, inclusive and sustainable community development are central in all developments;
- To implement the community elements of the adopted Local Economic and Community Plan;
- To promote the creation of strong, vibrant neighbourhoods in the settlements of County Clare, each with a range of services and amenities which are easily accessible by local residents;
- To promote and support improved social and community infrastructure throughout the County; and
- To encourage, promote and facilitate active and inclusive participation in physical and social activities.

10.2 Sustainable and Inclusive Communities

A key aim of the development plan is to ensure that the County is synonymous with a high quality of life based on healthy, vibrant, accessible, and inclusive communities, and by ensuring that future developments support these communities Clare County Council has a significant role to play in this regard. The Council will promote the:

- Reduction in car dependency through locating residential developments in close proximity to existing services;

- Provision of accessible community facilities to enhance social interaction and quality of life;
- Creation of activity-friendly environments (e.g., cycle-lanes and walkways with lighting);
- Creation of compact and walkable urban forms to increase community cohesion;
- Provision of local play and community facilities adjacent to existing services to encourage linked trips and to ensure that facilities are accessible to all local residents.

It is an aim of the Council that each settlement (and neighbourhoods in large settlements) will be high quality places in which to live with conveniently located essential services. To achieve this, future development proposals are required to be of high-quality design and layout and to integrate with or where needed make provision for these essential services.

Development Plan Objective: Sustainable Communities	
CDP10.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To ensure that future development proposals contribute to the creation of sustainable communities throughout County Clare; and b) To work in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate the planning and delivery of accessible community facilities throughout the County.

10.3 Local Community Development Committee

The Clare Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) plays a pivotal oversight role in local and community development programmes and in preparing the community element of the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP). The LCDC promotes coherent and meaningful citizen and community engagement in the scoping, planning, delivery, and evaluation of local and community development programmes. In implementing the Clare LECP, the Council works in partnership with local communities to promote quality of life and well-being, addresses the needs of disadvantaged communities, pursues labour activation schemes such as social enterprises, supports rural transport initiatives and enhances the County's towns and villages.

Development Plan Objective: Local Community Development Committee	
CDP10.2	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support the work of the Clare Local Community Development Committee; b) To work with the Clare Local Community Development Committee and all relevant stakeholders to seek investment

	<p>in delivering the actions and stakeholder initiatives of the Clare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 (and any subsequent Plan) so as to strengthen community infrastructure and promote social inclusion for all citizens across all our communities;</p> <p>c) To seek investment in initiatives that achieve the physical, economic, social, and environmental regeneration of disadvantaged areas in the County and the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area; and</p> <p>d) To support the development of an inter-agency Social Enterprise Strategy to support the retention and expansion of existing social enterprises and the development of new social enterprises.</p>
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10.4 Social and Community Engagement

The work carried out by voluntary groups, community groups and sporting groups makes a significant positive contribution to local communities and the quality of life in the County. The Clare Public Participation Network, which comprises of a network of over 300 community and voluntary groups, is one of the main links through which the Council connects with the community, voluntary and environmental sectors. This places local and community development at the heart of local government and ensures that the work of the Council is consistent with community needs.

Development Plan Objective: Voluntary and Community Groups	
CDP10.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To actively engage with the Clare Public Participation Network in the preparation and implementation of this Plan and other local authorities' plans, policies and programmes to ensure that it represents and responds to the needs of the residents of County Clare; and</p> <p>b) To support the empowerment of individuals and groups in communities through volunteering and active citizen engagement.</p>

10.5 Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society

Accessible living, working and leisure environments are necessary so that people of all backgrounds and circumstances can achieve equality of access to the facilities/services they require to fulfil their potential. The recognition of the positive contributions of minority groups to communities and economic life and the promotion of social inclusion are important roles of the Development Plan and the Plan includes a range of strategies to address issues such as access to housing, community facilities and amenities, and increased participation in cultural and social life. The Clare Local Economic and Community Plan has a strong focus on

promoting and supporting the interests of local communities, including enhancing quality of life and wellbeing. The Plan contains measures aimed at tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion and its implementation will make a positive contribution to communities across the County.

The Council will work to support the Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) in the implementation of the Clare Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) which aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

Development Plan Objective: Diverse and Socially Inclusive Society	
CDP10.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To plan for a more diverse and socially inclusive society which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Recognises the positive contribution of migrants and persons seeking international protection to multi-cultural communities and the economic life of an area and supports the Government’s <i>Migrant Integration Strategy</i>; ii) Prioritises parity of opportunity and improved well-being and quality of life for all citizens of the County including for example the LBGTI+ community, travellers and minority groups through enhanced integration programmes, measures to support sustainable accessible communities and the provision of associated services; b) To work with all relevant stakeholders to help tackle disadvantage and social exclusion, to secure improvements in the quality of life for all citizens and to promote equality of access to public and social services; and c) To work with all target groups, including older persons, young people, the disabled, the traveller community, refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, to advance their physical, social and cultural integration.

10.6 Universal Accessibility

Inclusivity seeks to ensure that all sections of the population can access high quality public services, education, amenities, employment, and housing in an equal manner without discrimination and/or physical barriers. The importance of social infrastructure in developing strong and inclusive communities is recognised by the Council and the Plan includes objectives for tackling poverty, disadvantage and social exclusion.

Sections 26, 27, 28 and 29 of the Disability Act 2005 set out the obligations of public bodies to make their services, information, and heritage sites accessible to people with disabilities.

In addition, the *Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information provided by Public Bodies* and the *Code of Practice on Accessible Heritage Sites* guide public bodies in meeting these obligations.

Development Plan Objective: Inclusivity and Equal Access	
CDP10.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To promote social inclusion by implementing best practice in universal accessibility and design; b) In conjunction with representative organisations to promote disability awareness and improve equal access for all through universal design for public transport access, housing, social, cultural and recreational facilities and the public realm so as to improve quality of life equally for all; c) To work with representative organisations to ensure that investment in infrastructure and facilities is appropriately informed with regard to accessibility issues; d) To take all required steps to ensure compliance with the <i>Disability Act 2005</i>; and e) To support the upgrade and extension of existing pedestrian provision and public lighting facilities in existing urban areas to further promote walking, cycling and active travel.

10.7 Age-Friendly County

The number of older persons (defined as 65+) in County Clare has increased by over 3,000 since 2011 representing 15% of the overall population of the County and a 2.6% increase since 2011. It is important to assess the needs of this ageing community and to facilitate the maintenance of a good quality of life as people grow older by ensuring that available resources are optimised, and necessary facilities are provided.

The Smart Ageing and National Positive Ageing policies, the *An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy* and the Council's Clare Age-Friendly County Programme, including the *Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan* provide the foundations for ensuring that older people are supported, connected and valued for their contribution to community and family. The Council's Programme seeks to ensure that Clare's social, cultural, economic and physical environments become more age-friendly and supportive of a healthy and positive experience of ageing. The age-friendly approach will also benefit persons with impaired mobility and parents with young children. The Development Plan aims to develop life-long communities with adequate housing, transport, local retail and services, and social and outdoor facilities for all age groups.

10.7.1 Ageing in Place

‘Ageing in Place’ means that older people can continue living in their communities and homes for as long as their health and financial situation allows and should have continued access to educational, cultural, and recreational facilities. The creation and modification of the built environment can affect the lives of all community members and through the implementation of the principles of ‘Universal Design’, architects, designers and planners have a major impact in terms of creating the environment that enables people to remain in their own homes.

Development Plan Objective: Age-Friendly County	
CDP10.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To proactively support the implementation of the Smart Ageing and National Positive Ageing policies, the <i>An Garda Síochána Older People Strategy</i> and the <i>Clare Age Friendly Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2022</i>, (and any subsequent strategy and action plan); b) To work with developers, communities, and relevant stakeholders to achieve accessible and age-friendly built environments across the County including housing, transport infrastructure and leisure amenities and facilities; and c) To have regard to the <i>Age Friendly Principles and Guidelines for the Planning Authority</i> in the assessment of proposed developments.

10.8 Community Facilities

There is a large range of amenities and facilities in the County including community buildings, youth clubs and sporting facilities that contribute to quality of life, wellbeing, and social interaction and many of these are owned and/or managed by local communities. To assist in retaining these amenities and facilities the Council will discourage their change of use to non-community uses and will also work with community groups to ensure that their potential uses are fully explored and availed of.

Development Plan Objective: Community Facilities	
CDP10.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To promote and encourage optimum usage of the large number of community facilities across the County; b) To update the inventory of community, social and cultural facilities throughout the County within the lifetime of this Plan; c) To encourage, advise and assist community groups wishing to provide community facilities in their area; and

	d) To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for community use to meet the demands of the projected population during the lifetime of this Plan.
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10.9 Community Gardens and Allotments

Community gardens and allotments contribute to neighbourhood improvement, the creation of a sense of community, increased connections to the environment and the enhancement of biodiversity and the overall green infrastructure network in the County. Where these are developed and managed appropriately, they can also play important educational and social roles in local communities.

Development Plan Objective: Community Gardens and Allotments	
CDP10.8	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate the development of community gardens and allotments in County Clare (subject to normal environmental and planning considerations).

10.10 Social Infrastructure

Strong and relevant social infrastructure is essential to the creation of healthy, inclusive, and sustainable communities and includes locations and amenities such as cemeteries, childcare facilities, colleges, day centres, health centres, libraries, museums, places of worship, public halls, schools, and sports fields. These should be provided in a coordinated manner in communities across the County and at locations that are accessible to the population that they serve. The Council facilitates and supports the development of these facilities.

10.11 Arts, Culture & Language

Clare County Council supports and facilitates traditional and contemporary cultures and cultural activities and embraces the dynamic and multi-cultural society in the County. The “arts” are defined under the Arts Act 2003 and the Council provides financial and other assistance for the purpose of stimulating public interest in the arts, promoting knowledge, appreciation and practice of the arts and the improvement of standards in the arts. A strong arts and cultural sector can enhance the quality of life, promote social inclusion, attract visitors, create employment, and contribute to the economic growth of the County.

Whilst County Clare does not have a Gaeltacht area the Council is cognisant of the importance of promoting the Irish language and is supportive of initiatives in this regard.

Development Plan Objective: Arts and Cultural Development	
CDP10.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To develop programmes that support the arts and people’s experience of the arts both as participants and audience members; b) To support and to seek investment for the development of a network of workspaces/hubs and display facilities for visual arts works throughout the County for artists, artistic organisations and community groups; c) To support the implementation of the Clare County Council Arts Strategy 2019-2023 and subsequent revisions. d) To support cultural and entertainment activities in the County by operating within the national cultural policy framework 'Culture 2025' and by co-operating with the Arts Council of Ireland, community groups and other bodies; and e) To support events and activities that allow people from different cultures to meet and learn about their different traditions, music, food, religions etc. in order to support the development of an open, inclusive and multi-cultural society in County Clare. f) To support and facilitate the development of new indoor and outdoor spaces in County Clare that can enable formal and informal community engagement.

10.12 Physical Recreation and Active Living

The aim of the *National Physical Activity Plan* is to ‘increase physical activity levels across the entire population thereby improving the health and wellbeing of people living in Ireland, where everybody will be physically active and where everybody lives, works and plays in a society that facilitates, promotes and supports physical activity and an active way of life with less time spent being sedentary.

Active Living refers to the integration of physical activity into everyday routines such as cycling to work or walking to the local shop. Physical recreation and active living are inherently interlinked with health and wellbeing, increase opportunities for socialisation, networking and cultural activities and tackling sedentary lifestyles. The Council has a central role in ensuring that towns, villages, and communities develop in a manner that enables physical activity and active living. A significant determinant of the health of people is accessibility to local recreational spaces and facilities and there is a need to ensure that when such facilities are provided they cater for different groups in the community and enable all citizens to be physically active in their daily lives.

The *Healthy Clare Strategic Plan 2019-2021* sets the policy context for the provision of a wide variety of amenities for communities across the County.

**Development Plan Objective:
Physical Recreation and Active Living**

CDP10.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the implementation of the <i>National Sports Policy 2018-2027</i> (both the vision and objectives), the National Sports Capital Programme, the Healthy Ireland initiative, the <i>National Physical Activity Plan</i> and the <i>Healthy Clare Strategic Plan 2019-2021</i> and any subsequent policies, strategies, plans or programmes; b) To promote Active Living as a means of enhancing health, wellbeing and social inclusion; c) To work with local community groups to support and expand the Slí na Sláinte network in County Clare, in compliance with all relevant legislation; d) To work with Clare Sports Partnership, local communities, clubs and relevant bodies to support local groups that promote/organise walking, cycling and other recreational activities and to increase sport and physical activity participation in the County; e) To support the coordinated development of new indoor and outdoor recreational facilities in County Clare, based on need; f) To support investment in the sustainable development of larger sports projects in the region under the Large-Scale Sports Infrastructure Fund; g) To work in coordination with all relevant stakeholders to ensure that the necessary facilities and infrastructure are in place to support Active Living and increased levels of physical recreation; h) To support the development of cycle-parking facilities at appropriate locations in all urban areas in the County; i) To ensure that new recreation facilities/amenities are based on the principles of sustainable development and incorporate efficient heating systems, lighting etc; j) To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned for recreational uses to meet the needs of the projected population during the lifetime of this Plan; and k) To ensure that future development, zoning or recreational facilities are in compliance with all relevant legislation as outlined in Objective CDP3.3. l) To support the extension and modification of existing sports, social, cultural and leisure facilities where these are consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of an area.
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10.13 Recreational Routes

The County’s off-road walking and cycling routes provide recreational opportunities and amenities for both local residents and visitors to the County. The walks include numerous way-marked trails and looped walks such as the Doolin to Hags Head cliff walk. Ennistymon and Lahinch now benefit from a cycleway link and the development of a greenway along the former route of the West Clare Railway will further add to the recreational walking and cycling infrastructure of the County. There are further opportunities across County Clare to develop the network of walking and cycling trails, blueways and peatways.

Sustainably developed and maintained active travel routes, in addition to having educational, recreational and conservation roles are also of considerable economic benefit to the local areas along the routes. Having regard to Coillte’s *Recreation Strategy* and *Off-Road Cycling Strategy 2012*, the Council recognises the potential to increase the recreational role of forestry in the County including projects such as the development of a regional-scale trail centre for off-road cycling at Cratloe Woods.

Development Plan Objective: Recreational Routes	
CDP10.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the maintenance of existing off-road walking and cycling trails and support investment in the sustainable development of walking and cycling facilities, greenway and blueway corridors within the County and region extending into and between our County's settlements; b) To support and facilitate the development of a network of interlinked greenways and necessary supporting infrastructure along the former route of the West Clare Railway subject to project level environmental assessments (Refer to Volume 2 for the indicative route of the West Clare Railway Greenway); c) To promote the development of regional-scale off-road cycling trails and associated facilities in the Cratloe Woods area; d) To ensure that any proposed development for off-road walking and cycling are based on rigorous site/route selection studies, take into consideration the safe and adequate provision of access, set-down and parking areas, and where appropriate that natural borders/buffers are included as an integral component of the design; e) To complete heritage audits and improve heritage interpretation along walking and cycling routes in the County;

	<p>f) To encourage and support the development of ancillary businesses such as bike hire and repair, outdoor clothing sales, drying rooms for walkers, surfers and others as well as businesses offering walking and cycling tours subject to normal planning considerations;</p> <p>g) To ensure that the development of any off-road walking and cycling routes, blueways and peatways is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment, including all necessary reports to assess the potential impact on designated European sites and any impacts that may arise from increased visitor pressures; and</p> <p>h) To ensure that all cycle routes adhere to the principles contained within the national policy document <i>Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future</i>, and the <i>National Cycle Policy Framework</i> or any updated/amended guidance document and that integration between routes is achieved where appropriate.</p> <p>i) To have regard to the Code of Best Practice for National & Regional Greenways in the development of greenway corridors within the county.</p>
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10.14 Countryside Recreation

County Clare has a varied countryside which offers abundant opportunities for recreational activity. These activities have the potential to diversify and strengthen the rural economy and include developments such as walking and mountain bike trails, forestry-based recreation and the reuse of quarries for activities such as climbing, abseiling and off-road sports. To ensure that these activities in rural areas can be safely and easily accessed the development of links with adjacent towns and villages is required.

Development Plan Objective: Countryside Recreation	
CDP10.12	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the diversification of the rural economy through the development of the recreational potential of the countryside, in accordance with the Comhairle na Tuaithe: <i>National Countryside Recreation Strategy</i> and the Walks Scheme and subject to compliance with Objective CDP3.3; and</p> <p>b) To promote and support access to rural areas including upland areas, forestry, coastal areas and the development of existing walking routes, pilgrim paths, mountain trails and nature trails in conjunction with other public bodies, representative agencies and community groups.</p>

	c) To support the Leave No Trace Outdoor Ethics Education Programme designed to promote and inspire responsible outdoor recreation through education, research and partnership.
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10.15 Public Rights of Way

Established public rights of way constitute an important amenity and the Council recognises the importance of maintaining these and supporting initiatives for establishing walking routes in the County. The Development Plan is required under the *Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended*, to preserve public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility. The Act requires that such public rights of way shall be identified both by marking them on at least one of the maps forming part of the development plan and by including a list with their location appended to the Plan.

The inclusion of a public right of way in this plan is based on evidence of such a right of way existing and in particular of its compliance with the specific requirements of Section 10(2)(o) of the Act. This is not an exhaustive list and does not affect the existence or validity of any other public rights of way which are not included in the Plan. Public rights of way are set out in Appendix 6 of this Plan including a list of locations and associated maps.

Development Plan Objective: Public Rights of Way	
CDP10.13	It is an objective of Clare County Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To encourage the preservation of existing public rights of way within the Plan area; and b) In accordance with the provisions of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended), including Sections 10 and 14, to preserve public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility, as set out in the maps associated with this Plan.

10.16 Play Facilities

The Council recognises the need to maximise opportunities for play facilities for children and teenagers in the natural and built environment to enhance the quality of life and sense of community. Facilities can range from tot-lots in town centre areas to encourage family activity in urban settings to larger community playgrounds and play areas. Through the implementation of a highly successful ‘community ownership’ approach, in recent years significant investment has been made in children’s play and recreational facilities across the County.

**Development Plan Objective:
Play Facilities**

CDP10.14	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support local communities in the provision of a range of play facilities across the County, including tot-lots, playgrounds, skate parks and other play areas in appropriate locations.
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10.17 Educational Services

Access to pre-school and childcare facilities, primary and secondary educational facilities, higher education, and adult learning is critical to the economic success and social progress of the County. In this regard rural depopulation is a significant challenge to the provision and ongoing retention of educational services and the Council will continue to work with local communities, education providers and all relevant stakeholders to address this issue.

10.17.1 Pre-School/Childcare Facilities

The availability of sufficient childcare spaces to meet the needs of the population of the County is required to facilitate economic growth and participation in employment and education. Such provision is of particular importance for vulnerable or disadvantaged members of the community to encourage social integration.

Childcare facilities are encouraged to locate near to residential areas, employment areas, retail centres and other areas as appropriate. Whilst the Council recognises the benefits of such facilities in residential areas this must be balanced with the protection of residential amenities and the retention of the residential character of the area. Development proposals for change of use of all or part of a dwelling house in a residential area to a childcare facility will be assessed having regard to the standards set out in Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines.

**Development Plan Objective:
Childcare Facilities**

CDP10.15	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To encourage the provision of affordable and accessible childcare and pre-school facilities on well-located sites that are close to the populations they intend to serve throughout County Clare and in line with population and employment growth; b) To facilitate the development of additional childcare services for vulnerable or disadvantaged groups in the community; and
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	c) To have regard to <i>Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities</i> (2001) or any updated version in the assessment of applications for childcare facilities.
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10.17.2 Primary and Secondary School Facilities

Schools are a key element of the social and community infrastructure of an area and in many instances act as anchors of wider social and community facilities. The County is currently well-served in relation to primary and secondary school facilities. However, as per the *Provisions for Schools and the Planning System – Code of Practice 2008*, the Council must ensure that adequate serviced lands are available in appropriate locations, to facilitate the development of primary and secondary schools. There are a number of locations throughout the County, including Ennistymon, Killaloe and Kilrush where new schools are required, and suitable sites will be provided for in this Plan.

New residential developments and the natural growth of the population of an area can generate a demand for a significant number of new school places. To support sustainable communities the planning system must facilitate the timely expansion of existing schools and the development of new school buildings where required. Where a need for additional facilities has been identified, suitable lands are zoned in the relevant settlement plan. In addition to the *2008 Code of Practice*, in the assessment of applications for school development the Planning Authority will also have regard to the *Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Area – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2009), the Department of Education and Skills technical guidance documents *Identification and Suitability of Sites for Post primary Schools* and *General Design Guidance for Schools*, and any other relevant guidance.

A number of rural primary schools, located in close proximity to larger urban centres, have been progressively expanding, chiefly to accommodate children travelling from within the neighbouring urban areas. In the interest of promoting sustainable travel and transport patterns, the expansion of rural schools to accommodate children from neighbouring urban areas will be discouraged.

Development Plan Objective: Primary and Secondary Education

CDP10.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate the provision of schools by zoning suitable lands in settlement plans and local area plans capable of meeting the demands of the projected populations and in line with the 2008 Code of Practice, <i>The Provision of Schools and the Planning System</i>;</p> <p>b) To ensure that all Local Area Plans and SDZ Planning Schemes should ensure that access by walking, cycling and public transport is a key determinant in the location of new schools.</p>
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	<p>c) To ensure that land developed for educational purposes is located as close as possible to the area experiencing population growth that it is intended to serve, are along public transport corridors where available and in close proximity to complementary services/facilities to allow for shared use;</p> <p>d) That new school sites in the Key Town of Ennis or within the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area should maximise opportunities whereby students and staff can travel by walking, cycling or public transport;</p> <p>e) To ensure that the design of new schools and the expansion of existing schools maximises the priority for pedestrians and cyclists above that of vehicular traffic and addresses conflict between motorists and pedestrians and cyclists;</p> <p>f) To assess and ensure the adequacy of school capacity when dealing with planning applications for large residential developments; and</p> <p>g) To ensure that planning applications for new schools or the expansion of existing schools should only be permitted where it is demonstrated that the road network in the vicinity of the proposed development can facilitate, or is planned to facilitate, safe walking and cycling, and where the promotion of behavioural change measures regarding active and safe travel to the school site are demonstrated as capable of being implemented through mobility management planning.</p>
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10.17.3 Third Level and Higher Education

County Clare accommodates and/or is located in close proximity to a number of higher education institutes including the University of Limerick, the Technological University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest (TUS), NUI Galway, the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, the Shannon College of Hotel Management, the Burren College of Art and the College of Further Education and Training Ennis Campus. As a result, Clare has a highly-educated workforce and is an attractive location for research and development, business development and investment. The University of Limerick Clare Campus is continuing to evolve and grow, making a significant contribution to higher education, the progression of the knowledge economy and overall economic development of the County.

The further development of higher education institutes in County Clare, through the direct development of new facilities such as the TUS and the Further Education and Training campuses in Ennis and through course-delivery methods such as outreach/distance and blended learning is encouraged and supported by the Council. There are opportunities to develop stronger linkages between the County and universities located in the County's twin

cities and regions of Phoenix in Arizona and the Yunnan Province in China. In addition, there are also opportunities through changed education practices or the establishment of additional education facilities in the county to offer higher education facilities in rural areas of the county.

Development Plan Objective: Third Level and Higher Education	
CDP10.17	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) To support the further development of higher education facilities in County Clare; b) To support the consolidation and expansion of the Technological University of Shannon Midlands Midwest in Ennis, the Shannon College of Hotel Management and the Burren College of Art; c) To collaborate with the higher education institutes and the Regional Skills Fora in the provision of a knowledge and innovation-based economy for the County and Region, including off-campus research and development; d) To support investment in Higher Education Institutes, Education and Training Board, apprenticeships, and skills development in the County as an enabler of jobs growth; (e) To establish the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre, to manage, develop and promote the maritime facilities there, and to ensure the sustainability and success of this initiative through, in particular, taking advantage of the emerging markets in renewable energy at this strategic location on the West Clare coastline, and f) To support the delivery of a Regional Design Centre to provide a focus for linkages between third level institutes, private design companies and enterprise.

10.17.4 Further Education and Lifelong Learning

Adult learning includes evening and part-time courses such as those offered by the Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), Clare Local Development Company and by numerous secondary schools in the County. Opportunities for further education and adult learning are key elements of educational provision and social development and the Council will encourage groups and providers to examine mechanisms to increase the availability of all existing community educational facilities and training resources to a wider section of the population.

Development Plan Objective: Further Education and Lifelong Learning	
CDP10.18	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate a collaborative approach to regional skills development aligned to the needs and opportunities of regional economies and to encourage the consolidation and expansion of all tiers of educational services and associated educational and skills training programmes subject to compliance with Objective CDP3.1; and</p> <p>b) To collaborate with other agencies including the Limerick Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB) in the delivery of lifelong learning, skills training and post-secondary school education especially in areas of higher education and further education and training where skills gaps are identified.</p>

10.18 Dual Use of Community Facilities

Schools and other educational premises represent a valuable resource in terms of land and buildings, which generally are used on a partial basis only. The dual use of educational facilities, where it does not conflict with the delivery of the education service i.e., outside school hours and during school holidays, can contribute to meeting the wider needs of the community, by helping to accommodate a variety of activities. The DoEHLG *Childcare Facilities Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (2001) recommend the use of school premises to cater for after school care and schools are encouraged to examine how they can cater for such activities. Where new schools and other community facilities are proposed, opportunities will be sought to ensure that they are designed in such a way as to facilitate dual use.

Development Plan Objective: Dual Use Facilities	
CDP10.19	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To encourage and promote the sharing of the use of school facilities with community groups where possible having regard to the “Government’s guidelines on the use of School Buildings outside of School Hours”, Department of Education and Skills; and</p> <p>b) To encourage the shared use of all community facilities for use by all groups in the Plan area.</p>

10.19 Digital Hubs

The development of co-working hubs in the form of digital, remote working, co-working or creative spaces has the potential to stimulate local economies, offer people more flexible work options, reduce commuting levels, and improve quality of life. The Council, through the Digi-Clare initiative, has provided remote working and hot desk facilities that are broadband

enabled at a number of locations across the County including Ennis, Cross, Carron, Corofin, Ennistymon, Feakle, Inagh, Kilrush, Kilkee and Miltown Malbay. Future developments with regard to digital hubs will be guided by the *Clare Digital Strategy 2023*. See Section 6.13 in Chapter 6 of this Plan, for further information and detailed objectives relating to the Clare Digital Hub Network.

10.20 Healthcare and Wellbeing

Healthcare is provided by a range of private, community and charitable service providers in the county which are essential to ensuring that the residents of the County have access to the medical care they need. Recent Health Service Executive (HSE) policy reflects a shift away from traditional hospital-based care, towards more community-based care which meets people’s needs at local level and is delivered by primary care teams. The Council will seek to facilitate the provision and expansion of these facilities and services to ensure accessible healthcare services are integrated into communities across Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Health Services	
CDP10.20	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To improve access to quality healthcare services through facilitating initiatives and projects under the <i>National Development Plan 2018-2027</i> as well as facilitating public, private and community-based agencies to provide appropriate healthcare facilities including for mental health, hospital care and community-based primary care throughout the County; b) To encourage the integration of appropriate healthcare facilities within new and existing communities; c) To facilitate and encourage the accommodation of emergency services including fire services, rescue services, heli-pads and acute care, in locations that facilitate ease of access, effectiveness and safety; and d) To support and facilitate the implementation of Sláintecare and to support the development of outreach and community services for an expanding and ageing population across the County.

10.20.1 Air Ambulance Facilities

County Clare includes significant areas of coastline, lakelands and peripheral areas where air ambulance services play an important role in the provision of accessible emergency services. In order to facilitate the provision of these services in emergency situations it is essential that suitable landing areas are identified and agreed across the County.

Development Plan Objective: Air Ambulance Facilities	
CDP10.21	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To work in coordination with all relevant stakeholders to identify air ambulance landing locations in coastal, estuarine and lakeside locations in County Clare.

10.21 The Library Service

There is a widespread network of Branch Libraries across the County which caters for all age groups and provide a wide range of services with extensive opening hours. These libraries are a valuable resource in terms of culture, heritage, and education, and they play an important role in the communities they serve. The County Library currently under construction as an extension to Glór in Ennis town centre will provide an excellent service to local residents.

Development Plan Objective: Libraries	
CDP10.22	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support and promote the services provided by the Branch Libraries to local communities across the County; and b) To support the completion and operation of the new library to serve the Ennis and Environs area during the lifetime of this Plan.

10.22 Burial Grounds and Crematoria

The Council co-ordinates the operation of approximately 170 burial grounds in the County and maintenance works are carried out at these locations by both the Council and local voluntary groups. In addition, the Council provides financial assistance for the extension of existing burial ground facilities and the provision new burial grounds.

Ennis will require additional burial ground facilities in the coming years and the Council will work to identify suitable locations during the lifetime of this Plan.

The use of crematoria has increased significantly in recent years and the crematorium in Shannon currently serves the needs of the County. In recognition of the multi-cultural population of the County and the changing trends in end-of-life services, the Council support the provision of additional crematoria at appropriate locations in the County.

Development Plan Objective: Burial Grounds/Crematoria	
CDP10.23	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To provide extensions to existing burial grounds and facilitate the provision of new burial grounds in cooperation



with local communities, at appropriate locations throughout the County;

b) To ensure that burial grounds throughout the County are managed and maintained in a manner which respects their associated culture and heritage, having regard to the relevant byelaws;

c) To support the development of crematoria in County Clare, subject to normal planning considerations; and

d) To support the provision of new funeral homes which are designed to sensitively meet the needs of a diverse population.

Chapter 11 Physical Infrastructure, Environment and Energy

Goal X: A county that supports strong economic growth and a high quality of life for all residents through the provision of efficient and robust physical infrastructure whilst having regard to environmental responsibilities and complying with European and National legislation.

Chapter 11 Table of Contents:

11.0	Introduction
11.1	Strategic Aims
11.2	Access and Movement
11.2.1	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy
11.2.2	Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning
11.2.3	Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) and Local Transport Planning
11.2.4	Active Travel Towns Programme
11.2.5	Walking and Cycling
11.2.6	Public Transport
11.2.7	Transport Assets and Multi-Modal Travel Integration
11.2.8	EV and CNG Infrastructure and Smart Mobility
11.2.9	Road Network
11.2.9.1	Motorway, National Roads and Strategic Inter-Urban Roads
11.2.9.2	Motorway Service and Rest Areas
11.2.9.3	Access onto National Roads
11.2.9.4	Strategic Regional Roads
11.2.9.5	Relief/Distributor Roads
11.2.10	Urban Roads and Streets
11.2.11	Shannon International Airport
11.2.12	Public Rights of Way
11.2.13	Coastal and Estuarine Transportation
11.2.14	Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers
11.2.15	Freight
11.2.16	Directional Signage
11.3	Water Resources
11.3.1	Water Framework Directive (WFD)
11.3.2	River Basin Management Plans
11.3.3	Water Resources



- 11.3.4 Water Extraction from Lough Derg
- 11.4 Water and Wastewater Services
 - 11.4.1 Water Supply
 - 11.4.2 Water Supply in the Ennis and Environs Area
 - 11.4.3 Wastewater Management
 - 11.4.3.1 Environmental Assessment Criteria
 - 11.4.4 Storm Water Management
- 11.5 Waste Management
 - 11.5.1 Waste Management Plans
 - 11.5.2 Waste Transfer and Recovery
 - 11.5.3 Litter Management
 - 11.5.4 Construction and Demolition Waste
 - 11.5.5 Agriculture Waste
- 11.6 Noise, Air and Light Pollution
 - 11.6.1 Noise Pollution
 - 11.6.2 Air Quality
 - 11.6.3 Light Pollution
- 11.7 SEVESO – Major Accidents Directive
- 11.8 Energy and Communications
 - 11.8.1 Energy Strategy
 - 11.8.2 Energy Security
 - 11.8.3 Electricity Network
 - 11.8.4 Gas Networks
 - 11.8.5 Renewable Energy Sources
 - 11.8.6 Energy Storage
 - 11.8.7 Energy Efficiency and Conservation
 - 11.8.8 Broadband Connectivity
 - 11.8.9 Telecommunications Infrastructure

11.0 Introduction

The provision of a high quality infrastructure in County Clare is critical to the county's socio-economic development. Due to the favourable position of County Clare on the western seaboard with significant potential for energy generation, an international airport, deep water estuary, railway and high quality motorway, national, regional, and local road networks, the county has a significant advantage within the Southern Region. These advantages must be progressed in tandem with the sustainable management and development of other essential infrastructure such as water services, waste management facilities and telecommunications infrastructure. By facilitating, coordinating, and encouraging the development of a wide range of high quality physical infrastructure, Clare County Council plays a central role in sustainable development, climate adaptation and mitigation, and the improvement in the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the County and Region.



11.1 Strategic Aims

This chapter presents the objectives for the provision of physical infrastructure for the existing and future population of County Clare, in accordance with the overall vision of the plan. These objectives are based on the following strategic aims:

- To provide a safe, integrated, efficient and sustainable network of transport to serve the needs of people, goods and services travelling to and within County Clare;
- To promote and encourage the use of alternative sustainable modes of transport;
- To safeguard the strategic transport function of the motorway and national road network and associated junctions in order to cater for the safe and efficient movement of inter-urban and inter-regional traffic;
- To facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions from transport in line with the National Climate Action Plan;
- To protect, improve and conserve the county's water resources to meet the requirements of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 and any subsequent revisions or updates to this plan;
- To encourage and promote the benefits of the reuse and recycling of waste and to enable the provision of appropriate waste management facilities throughout the county

in accordance with the upcoming National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy which will be the successor to the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021;

- To reduce County Clare’s dependence on imported fuels and to provide alternative energy sources by harnessing the county’s potential for renewable energy sources;
- To ensure security of energy supply throughout the county; and,
- To promote and facilitate the provision and continued development of broadband and ICT infrastructure to further enhance social and economic development, particularly in the more peripheral areas of County Clare.

11.2 Access and Movement

11.2.1 Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy

Transport is vital to the functioning of economic activities and a key to ensuring social wellbeing and cohesion of populations. Transport ensures the everyday mobility of people and is crucial to the production and distribution of goods.

Sustainable transport is central to efforts to control greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and environmental damage. The benefits of sustainable transport however extend beyond environmental considerations, delivering improvements in congestion, productivity, health and quality of life. The integration of planning, land use and transportation is an essential component of identifying the optimum location of future development, encouraging the use of sustainable transport options and moving towards the development of a low carbon society. The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region sets out the regional development framework and infrastructure priorities to 2040 with the primary aim of implementing Project Ireland 2040: The National Planning Framework at regional level.

Development Plan Objective: Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy	
CDP 11.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To facilitate, support, seek funding for and invest in the infrastructure projects identified in the RSES throughout the lifetime of this plan; and, b) To prioritise investment in and delivery of comprehensive infrastructure packages that address infrastructure deficits and meet growth targets that prioritise the delivery of compact growth and sustainable mobility as per the NPF and RSES objectives.

11.2.2 Integrated Land Use and Transport Planning

In order to promote public transport, walking and cycling across the county, it is the intention of the Council to:

- Consolidate development into town and village centres in accordance with the 10 Minute Town concept;
- Consolidate development around existing and proposed public transport services and facilities;
- Increase densities in future residential and employment developments;
- Prioritise mixed-use development which reduce the need to travel;
- Ensure that all new development areas will be fully permeable for pedestrians and cyclists through the application of the principle of filtered permeability whereby through traffic by private car is discouraged;
- Deliver schemes to improve permeability for walking and cycling in existing developed areas; and,
- Ensure that the layout of new developments will prioritise walking and cycling and enable the efficient provision of public transport services.

In its promotion of integrated land use and transportation planning, the Council will seek to implement the following national policy documents:

- The National Investment Framework for Transport Investment (Department of Transport);
- The Five Cities Demand Management Study (insofar as it relates to that part of Clare within the LSMA);
- The National Sustainable Mobility Policy (Department of Transport) which sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel (walking and cycling) and public transport journeys to help Ireland meet its climate obligations. It is accompanied by an action plan to 2025 which contains actions to improve and expand sustainable mobility options across the country by providing safe, green, accessible and efficient alternatives to car journeys, as well as demand management and behavioural change measures to manage daily travel demand more efficiently and to reduce the journeys taken by private car.

The following table provides a baseline of the travel mode share for each settlement. The data shows the Mode Share of all persons commuting to Work and Education from residential origin points in Ennis (Key Town) Shannon (Metropolitan Town) and the Service Towns of Scarriff/Tuamgraney, Ennistymon/Lahinch and Kilrush. The source of the data is the CSO POWSCAR database which is derived from the Census of 2016.

Table 11.1: Travel Mode Share by Settlement (2016 Baseline). Source: CSO POWSCAR, NTA, Clare County Council.

Settlement		Walk	Cycle	*Public Transport	Car	Car Passenger	**Other Modes
Ennis	All trips %	14.6	1.8	4.9	52.0	23.4	3.3
	Work Trips %	10.4	2.0	2.0	74.8	6.1	4.8
	Edu Trips %	22.9	1.4	10.6	6.7	57.9	0.4
Shannon	All trips %	23.7	3.0	5.8	47.1	17.9	2.5
	Work Trips %	11.8	2.5	3.7	68.8	9.4	3.8
	Edu Trips %	45.4	3.8	9.7	7.5	33.5	0.2
Scarriff-Tuamgraney	All trips %	20.0	0.5	2.4	46.3	25.1	5.6
	Work Trips %	9.3	0.0	0.4	74.1	7.6	8.5
	Edu Trips %	36.2	1.3	5.5	3.9	51.8	1.3
Ennistymon-Lahinch	All trips %	16.4	1.0	2.8	49.5	24.7	5.5
	Work Trips %	11.8	1.3	1.3	71.0	6.4	8.2
	Edu Trips %	25.5	0.4	5.6	7.7	60.4	0.4
Kilrush	All trips %	23.2	2.1	4.4	42.0	21.6	6.8
	Work Trips %	17.3	2.9	0.7	63.1	5.6	10.4
	Edu Trips %	32.7	0.7	10.3	8.0	47.2	1.1
*Public Transport Includes Bus and Train				**Other Modes Includes Motorbike, Van, HGV			

Development Plan Objective: Transport Planning	
CDP 11.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the overarching goal of transport planning in county Clare is to reduce car dependency and reduce emissions; b) To promote steady State investment to maintain and upgrade the existing road, rail and bus networks to provide a quality service to transport users; c) To implement initiatives under the Department of Transport to reduce congestion in urban areas primarily by enhancing sustainable travel options through traffic management, bus priority, urban cycling and urban walking routes; d) To support the reduction in the use of fossil fuels for public transport and increasing use of technology and green energy sources to pursue low emission public transport fleets which is being pursued by the NTA as part of its fleet investment programme;

	<p>e) To facilitate the expansion of the bus network by the NTA under initiatives such as Limerick BusConnects, Connecting Ireland and TFI Local Link Limerick Clare;</p> <p>f) To support the implementation of Park and Ride initiatives in accordance with LSMATS;</p> <p>g) To oversee investment in cycling and walking networks within all settlements, with an emphasis on providing for trips to school and retail services;</p> <p>h) To support the development of sustainable water transportation services for the Shannon Estuary in accordance with SIFP Objectives SIFP TPT 1.5, 1.7 and 1.8 contained in Volume 9 of the plan;</p> <p>(i) To prepare a county-wide traffic and transport management plan during the lifetime of the plan, and</p> <p>j) To ensure development is being delivered in compliance with the environmental requirements of objectives CDP 11.17 and CDP 3.3.</p>
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11.2.3 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy (LSMATS) and Local Transport Planning

The NPF envisages that the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area (LSMA) will become the growth engine of the Mid-West Region with projected growth of at least 50% during the period up to 2040. This projected population, employment and education growth brings with it opportunities for the development of the LSMA. The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2040 (LSMATS) will deliver a high quality, accessible, integrated and more sustainable transport network that supports the role of the LSMA as the major growth engine of the Mid-West Region. This will enable the LSMA to be internationally competitive as a European city region and to act as a main international entry point to the Atlantic Economic Corridor.

Local transport plans give local expression to the RSES regional level transport strategy in accordance with the requirements of RPO 157. A Local Transport Plan (including mobility management) will be prepared for a number of towns and villages across County Clare, including Ennis, within the lifetime of this plan.

Development Plan Objective: Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy and Local Transport Planning	
CDP 11.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To implement the measures contained within the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy in accordance with the implementation plan set out in the LSMATS document;</p> <p>b) To implement a local transport plan for Ennis, Shannon, Sixmilebridge, Kilkee, Kilrush, Lahinch, Corofin and Tulla during the lifetime of this development plan;</p> <p>c) That the Local Transport Plans will be prepared in accordance with the TII/NTA Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance;</p> <p>d) That the findings and recommendations of any Local Transport Plans, undertaken in accordance with ABTA, will be incorporated into the preparation of the statutory local area plans, where relevant;</p> <p>(e) To prepare a North Clare Traffic Management Plan during the lifetime of the plan, and,</p> <p>f) To work in close co-operation with Technical University of the Shannon: Midlands Midwest and the Endurance European Network.</p>

11.2.4 Active Travel Towns Programme

The Active Travel Towns programme aims to support sustainable and active travel by:

- Creating safer walking and cycling routes through the provision of high quality infrastructure;
- Reducing the need for short distance car journeys; and,
- Providing sustainable links to schools, colleges, places of employment, amenity, and leisure facilities.

Ennis has been designated as an Active Travel Town and has been awarded funding to implement a number of schemes to support sustainable travel in the County Town.

Development Plan Objective: Active Travel Towns	
CDP 11.4	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To implement an Active Travel Towns Programme in the Ennis area during the lifetime of this plan; b) To pursue opportunities for additional funding that may arise, for Ennis and other towns in the county, and, c) To support and facilitate the National Transport Authority in the implementation of the Active Travel Programme in County Clare.

11.2.5 Walking and Cycling

Cycling and walking present real opportunities to reduce the use of the private car and reduce greenhouse gases whilst also providing a healthier alternative to the car. The implementation of the LSMATS, local transport plan(s), the Active Travel Towns programmes, and the Safe Routes to School programmes will enhance walking and cycling and the Council will endeavour to encourage these activities through the integration of land use and transport planning, increased permeability, the provision of bicycle lanes, the creation of pedestrian-friendly zones, pedestrian crossings, dished footpaths, public lighting and the implementation of the 10 Minute Town concept. The Southern Regional Assembly has carried out an assessment of a number of settlements across the region including Ennis and prepared a '10 Minute Town' concept report 10 Minute Towns: Accessibility & Framework Report (July 2020). This report will inform the roll out of this concept in County Clare and within the region. Where possible, the Council will seek to incorporate pedestrian and cycle friendly features into road improvement works and where appropriate, on new roads.

International trends suggest that the walking and cycling sectors of the tourism economy have the potential to grow considerably during the lifetime of the plan and County Clare is ideally placed through projects such as the Killaloe to Scarriff amenity path to benefit from this trend.

Long distance cycling routes for both recreational and transport purposes, such as the West Clare Railway Greenway and the Euro Velo Route are supported by Clare County Council and the Council will facilitate and support the development of these and other such routes. The Council will also have regard to Cycling Ireland's Strategic Plan 2020-2024 in the consideration of cycling proposals in the county.

Development Plan Objective: Walking and Cycling	
CDP 11.5	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To require walkability and accessibility to be a central consideration in the planning and design of all new developments, transport infrastructure and public transport services;

	<p>b) To facilitate and support the delivery of a safe, accessible and convenient cycle network and environment across the county and in the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area as set out in the Cycle Network Plans for Shannon and Limerick contained in the LSMATS;</p> <p>c) To support the development and enhancement of long-distance cycling routes in County Clare, in accordance with the Strategy for the Future Development of National and Regional Greenways;</p> <p>d) To safeguard, where feasible, the route of the old West Clare Railway which has not been affected by existing development and to encourage its use for recreational purposes and/or as part of a tourist attraction. Exceptions to this include short sections within the curtilage of residential or commercial property;</p> <p>e) To provide for cycling trips for people of all ages and abilities from residential areas to town centres, employment centres and school locations, in line with the National Cycle Manual;</p> <p>f) To support the development of new accessible walking routes and trails throughout the county;</p> <p>g) To support and promote initiatives such as Park and Stride, Green Schools Travel and Safe Routes to School Programmes and the concept of having safe routes to school;</p> <p>h) To support the enhancement of permeability, footpaths and the provision of safe crossing points in the towns and villages of the county;</p> <p>i) To support the creation of a safer environment for cyclists and signposted 'quiet routes' off the arterial roads which include speed limit reviews and junction redesigns where appropriate;</p> <p>j) To require significant walking and cycling route proposals to provide a Quality Audit, as referred to in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets; and,</p> <p>k) To ensure the development, enhancement, safeguarding of all walking and cycling routes are in compliance with the environmental requirements of Objective CDP 3.3.</p>
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11.2.6 Public Transport

Rail Network

The development of the Western Rail Corridor is important in terms of enhancing the economic and social development of the region thus achieving balanced regional development. The Council will therefore support land use policies, future development

proposals and transportation strategies that ensure the viability of a rail service between centres of population.

Development Plan Objective: Rail Network	
CDP 11.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support and facilitate the maintenance, improvement and strengthening of rail infrastructure and services and the provision of multi-modal transport interconnection facilities subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process; b) To support and facilitate the opening/reinstatement of railway stations on the Western Railway Corridor within County Clare and in particular at Crusheen, in line with feasibility studies undertaken on the basis of forecast demand and according to the investment priorities of Iarnród Éireann and the National Transport Authority; c) To protect lands adjacent to rail stations against encroachment by inappropriate uses that could compromise the long-term development of the rail infrastructure; d) To identify and safeguard land required for the development of rail infrastructure including bridges, stations, goods terminals, weather proofed facilities and areas necessary for the development of the rail infrastructure in the county; e) To work with Iarnród Éireann and other interested parties to find a resolution of the issue of periodic flooding of the Ennis to Limerick railway line in order to sustain year-round rail services from Ennis to Limerick City; and, f) To ensure that all proposed developments are in accordance with the requirements of Objective CDP 3.3.

Shannon Rail Link

An Infrastructure Safeguard (Rail) for the Shannon rail link is identified in the plan in line with the Shannon Rail Link Feasibility Study. A rail link to Shannon International Airport is supported by Government policy as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030, and in the infrastructural requirements as identified in the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy (RSES) for the Southern Region. Linking Shannon International Airport to the national rail network would enhance national and regional connectivity, which is a key strategic objective of the National Planning Framework (NPF).

Clare County Council will work in conjunction with the NTA, Iarnród Éireann and other relevant stakeholders to carry out a review of the existing feasibility study as it applies to the Shannon Rail Link infrastructural safeguard extending from the existing Limerick-Galway

railway line to Shannon International Airport. This review will include a route assessment to identify a preferred alignment for a potential rail line serving Shannon International Airport, Shannon Free Zone and Shannon town. The N19 National Road and the infrastructure safeguard of the proposed Shannon rail link are located in close proximity. The delivery of the N19 National Road upgrade is a priority of Clare County Council and should take precedence over other infrastructural projects along its route delivering on the significant exchequer investment already made in scheme planning and design.

The LSMATS includes for a rail link from Limerick to Shannon town, the Shannon Free Zone and Shannon International Airport as part of its proposed Limerick Commuter Rail Network (Phase 2).

Having regard to the provisions of the NDP, NPF, RSES and LSMATS above, linking Shannon International Airport by rail to the existing Ennis-Limerick line is envisaged as a component of both a Limerick Commuter Rail Network and as part of the national rail network. The county development plan is required to give effect to national and regional level plans and strategies such as those mentioned.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon Rail Link	
CDP 11.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To work in conjunction with the NTA, Iarnród Éireann and other relevant stakeholders to carry out a review of the existing feasibility study as it applies to the Shannon Rail Link infrastructure safeguard extending from the existing Limerick-Galway railway line to Shannon International Airport taking account of and being informed by the proposals contained within LSMATS to facilitate a commuter rail network for the Limerick - Shannon Metropolitan Area and by the N19 National Road upgrade; and,</p> <p>b) To facilitate a proposed Shannon Rail Link which does not inhibit the N19 National Road upgrade.</p>

Bus Transport

Bus transport forms a fundamental element of the overall public transport infrastructure linking the towns of Ennis and Shannon with Limerick City and beyond by means of a frequent, high quality service. Bus services in the county have been improved significantly with the provision of an hourly, private bus service between Ennis and Dublin via Limerick to complement the existing Bus Éireann regional and local services. The development of a dedicated coach park in close proximity to Ennis town centre has added to transport facilities in the town and contributed to ease of travel. Services in County Clare would be greatly enhanced by the increased provision of bus services between Ennis, Shannon and the service towns of Ennistymon/Lahinch, Kilrush and Scarriff/Tuamgraney. This would assist in delivering a strong regional public transport network.

County Clare also benefits from an excellent local bus service. TFI Local Link Limerick Clare and private operators provide an extensive service which is available to everyone and plays a particularly important role in sustaining rural communities by providing links between large urban areas and smaller settlements and rural areas. The Council fully supports these services and will seek to facilitate expanded services throughout the lifetime of this Plan. The Council will also work with the National Transport Authority on the Connecting Ireland – Rural Mobility Plan for County Clare. Services that provide connections to regional and national public transport services will be particularly encouraged.

Clare County Council have carried out a feasibility study of a bus service from Clarecastle to the Gort Road Business Park in Ennis, serving Clare Road, Clon Road, New Road, Steele’s Terrace and the Gort Road. The feasibility study showed that there is sufficient demand to make a bus service within the Ennis area feasible. Having regard to this study, Clare County Council will support the provision of such a bus service.

Development Plan Objective: Bus Transport	
CDP 11.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the provision of more regular, efficient and fully accessible bus services throughout the county, including through initiatives arising from the NTA’s Connecting Ireland rural mobility plan; b) To support the implementation of public bus network enhancements in the South Clare area through BusConnects Limerick; c) To encourage and support TFI Local Link Limerick Clare private/public/ community partnerships in the provision of a more widespread rural bus services; d) To support the creation of bus priority measures, integrated bus interchange stations and bus parking facilities both within settlements and at tourist facilities throughout the county subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the outcome of the planning process; e) To promote the introduction of new bus services on routes where they can offer a direct alternative to the routes most popular with private car users; f) To work with all relevant stakeholders to provide new bus pick-up/drop-off locations and bus shelters in towns and villages across the county; g) To work with stakeholders to encourage and promote a sustainable community-based public transport scheme that will enable access to service centres for all members of the community in the county;

	<p>h) To support the provision of a local bus service in Ennis and Clarecastle; and,</p> <p>i) To support direct inter-regional bus services to and from Shannon International Airport, Limerick and Galway.</p>
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11.2.7 Transport Assets and Multi-Modal Travel Integration

In order to reduce carbon emissions from the transport sector, to increase the usage of public transport and to increase its viability as an alternative to the private car for a greater number of users, it is vital that there is greater integration of public transport services. This integration should include both national transport providers and community-based services. Ennis as Clare’s County Town is an important origin and destination for trips around the county and to and from the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area and the Galway Metropolitan Area. It is intended that Ennis will function as a bus and rail connecting hub for the county and surrounding areas. The planning and design of transport infrastructure and services within the LSMA will take account of the demand for travel to and from Ennis and the objectives for the town as set out in Ennis 2040 An Economic and Spatial Strategy.

Development Plan Objective: Transport Assets and Multi-Modal Travel Integration	
CDP 11.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support accessibility to transport services and the integration of transport services throughout the county, with the wider Region, along the Atlantic Economic Corridor and Galway – Ennis – Shannon - Limerick (GESL) Economic Network, and between the Metropolitan Areas in order to create a more efficient transport network that meets the needs of a wide range of users, and which supports the use of sustainable travel choices;</p> <p>b) To ensure that the enhancement of existing land transport networks is based on robust feasibility, route selection, environmental assessment and planning processes that reduce impacts on the environment;</p> <p>c) To work with stakeholder agencies and government departments to ensure the effective management, maintenance and expansion of the strategic land transport networks;</p> <p>d) To develop Ennis as a bus and rail connecting hub for the County and surrounding areas; and,</p> <p>e) To incorporate considerations of the impact of climate change on transport planning including proposals under the Minor Works Programme.</p>

11.2.8 EV and CNG Infrastructure and Smart Mobility

A shift to more sustainable means of road freight and logistics transport, including EV and low emission fuels, is necessary to decarbonise transport. The Government's Climate Action Plan aims to develop the EV charging network necessary to support the growth of electric vehicles (EV's) to a target of 936,000 by 2030 and sets a target for the supply of infrastructure to stay sufficiently ahead of demand. It sets out its intention to develop and implement planning policies and guidelines across residential and non-residential parking locations for EV charging infrastructure.

All new development proposals will need to comply with these national requirements in terms of EV charge provision and the requirements as set out in Appendix 1 (Volume 1) of this plan.

National policy promotes the exploration of renewable compressed natural gas (CNG) and hydrogen as alternative fuel sources for medium and heavy-duty trucks. The development of CNG infrastructure will enable fuel switching from diesel to CNG for heavy goods vehicles. This will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions together with air quality benefits for vehicles currently using diesel. Initiatives such as Gas Networks Ireland's 'Causeway Project' aim to increase awareness of CNG as an alternative vehicle fuel source and to install a network of CNG refuelling stations aligned with the Trans European Transport Network corridors across the Country. The Causeway Project supports the National Policy Framework: Alternative Fuel Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland.

Autonomous (self-driving) vehicles are capable of sensing their environment and of moving safely with little or no human input. Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) is a not-for-profit organisation that was founded with the purpose of creating and delivering a future mobility ecosystem and test bed for stimulating research, development, and innovation in the area of Mobility as a Service (MaaS). Focus areas include Smart City infrastructure, Connected Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) for both road and air usage, including Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, big data management and analytics. The test bed is located in County Clare at the Shannon Free Zone.



Figure 11.1 CNG Refuelling Stations and CNG Injection Facilities in Ireland
Source (Gas Networks Ireland)

Development Plan Objective: EV and CNG Infrastructure and Smart Mobility	
CDP 11.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support investment in the sustainable development of Electric Vehicle charging facilities aligned with the county's transportation networks; b) To support investment in the sustainable development of CNG refueling stations aligned with the Trans European Transport Network corridors as a renewable technology for servicing public service vehicles and commercial fleets; c) To require the inclusion of electric vehicle charging point infrastructure within residential, commercial and mixed-use developments in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines; and, d) To support and facilitate the development of the Future Mobility Campus at Shannon and to seek investment in actions

	and initiatives that position County Clare and the wider Southern Region as a leader in the digital transformation of transportation, E-Mobility and sustainable mobility.
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11.2.9 Road Network

The road network in the county is made up of a motorway, national primary roads, national secondary roads, regional and local roads. County Clare has a large rural area with a dispersed population with the result that the car is the predominant mode of transport. The maintenance and upgrade of the existing road network and, where necessary, the provision of new road networks or realignments are essential to maximise connectivity into the future.

11.2.9.1 Motorway, National Roads and Strategic Inter-Urban Roads

These roads play a strategic role in inter-urban and inter-regional transport requirements and underpin economic success and competitiveness by providing faster, more efficient and safer access to and from ports, airports, cities and major towns. They also play a pivotal role in providing ready access to all parts of County Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Motorways, National Roads and Strategic Inter-Urban Roads	
CDP 11.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To safeguard the motorway, national roads and strategic regional inter-urban road connections between cities, settlements, ports and airports, and their associated road junctions, in line with national policy; b) To protect the study area, route corridor options and thereafter the preferred route corridor selected for the national road schemes being progressed in the development plan and to prohibit development that could prejudice their future delivery; c) To support the upgrade and improvement of motorways, national roads and strategic regional inter-urban road connections and their associated junctions, subject to compliance with requirements of the Habitats Directive and in compliance with the environmental requirements of Objectives CDP 11.17 and CDP 3.3; d) To advocate for and support improved road connectivity and, in particular, to advocate for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Limerick Northern Distributor Route (LNDR) connecting the N18 to M7; • A new interchange on the M18 at Quin Road Ennis; • An upgrade of the Ennis to Kilrush N68 National Secondary Route;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An upgrade/extension of the N19 to Shannon International Airport; • Provision of a new bridge crossing at N67/N85 Blakes Corner Ennistymon; and, • The N85 Kilnamona Road Improvement Scheme. <p>e) To sustainably maintain, support and enhance Clare's connectivity on the Trans European Transport Network;</p> <p>f) To ensure that the national road network drainage regimes in County Clare are safeguarded for national road drainage purposes.</p>
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11.2.9.2 Motorway Service and Rest Areas

Motorway service and rest areas are essential for driver safety and to ensure the availability of services and amenities for drivers. Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) has identified a need for an on-line Motorway Service Area on the M18 at a location between Junctions 7 (Sixmilebridge/Hurlers' Cross) and Junction 12 (Ennis). They have identified a need for a Type 1 Service Area (full service area) at this location.

Section 2.8 of the DECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012) provides guidance regarding off-line or roadside service facilities on non-motorway national roads and at or near their junctions. Any such facilities that are proposed within the county will only be favourably considered where it can be proven through a strong evidence-based approach that there is adequate junction capacity and that there will be no negative impact on the main-line traffic flow.

Development Plan Objective: Motorway Service and Rest Areas	
CDP 11.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To collaborate with Transport Infrastructure Ireland to secure the development of an on-line Type 1 Service Area on the M18 between Junction 7 and Junction 12 during the lifetime of this Plan, having regard to the NRA Service Area Policy (2014) and Spatial Planning and Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2012.

11.2.9.3 Access onto National Roads

In order to retain the safety, efficiency and carrying capacity of national primary and secondary roads within the county, development proposals involving access onto national roads will be assessed by the Council having regard to Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012).

Lands adjoining National Roads to which Speed Limits of Greater than 60kmh apply

The policy of the Planning Authority will be to avoid the creation of any additional access points from new developments or the generation of increased traffic from existing accesses onto national roads where speed limits greater than 60kmh apply in accordance with Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012), subject to the exceptional circumstances as set out below. This provision applies to all categories of development, including individual houses in rural areas, regardless of the housing circumstances of the applicant.

Transitional Zones

On sections of national road on the approaches to or exits from urban centres that are subject to a speed limit of 60kmh before a lower 50kmh limit is encountered – otherwise known as transitional zones – a limited level of direct access will be permitted to facilitate orderly urban development. Any proposal for such an access must be subject to a road safety audit in accordance with TII requirements and a proliferation of such entrances, which would lead to a diminution in the role of such zones, must be avoided.

Lands adjoining National Roads within 50kmh Speed Limits

In these areas the Planning Authority will consider access onto national roads in accordance with normal road safety, traffic management and urban design criteria for built up areas.

Exceptional Circumstances

Developments of National and Regional Strategic Importance

A less restrictive approach may be adopted in the case of developments of national and regional strategic importance which, by their nature, are most appropriately located outside urban areas and where the locations concerned have specific characteristics that make them particularly suitable for the development proposed.

In considering whether such exceptional circumstances arise, the Planning Authority will take the following matters into account:

- The relevance and appropriateness of the proposed development in supporting the aims and objectives of the NPF and the RSES;
- The requirements of other planning guidelines issued under Section 28 of the Act;
- The nature of the proposed development and the volume of traffic that will be generated by it;
- Any implications for the safety, capacity and efficient operation of national roads;
- Any plans for future upgrades of national roads and other transport infrastructure/services;
- The suitability of the location compared to alternative locations;

- The pattern of existing development in the area;
- Satisfactory details of the proposed demand management measures;
- Acceptable funding and delivery proposals for any road improvements required; and,
- The precedent that would be created for cumulative development in the area and the potential implications for the national road network.

Clare County Council has identified five locations where exceptional circumstances allow for exceptions to the general policy to be considered for developments of strategic importance, as follows:

- Moneypoint Power Station – provision of alternative sources of energy supply;
- Former Whelan’s Quarry site at Fountain Cross, Ennis – use as quarry; rehabilitation of site for outdoor activity/adventure park;
- Hotel and Golf Links, Doonbeg – intensification of existing uses;
- Central Waste Management Facility, Ballyduffbeg, Inagh – renewable energy project, waste transfer and recovery facility, eco-park; and,
- N19 National Road between Shannon Town Roundabout and Knockbeg Point.

The applicant/developer will be responsible for all costs associated with any road upgrades and/or junction improvements required to facilitate a development proposal seeking to avail of an exception referred to above. All upgrade proposals are to conform to road safety and design standards as set out in the relevant TII publications. Demand management measures shall accompany relevant planning applications to include mobility management/travel planning to address future trip management/travel planning and, where appropriate, visitor trips to the site.

Temporary access requirements for renewable energy developments are required to adhere to the road safety and design standards set out in TII publications and to include appropriate traffic management measures.

Lightly-trafficked Sections of National Secondary Routes

A less restrictive approach will be applied to lightly-trafficked sections of National Secondary roads where a balance needs to be struck between the important transport function of such roads and the social and economic development of the areas through which they pass. In consultation with TII and based on the criteria set out in Section 2.6 of Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2012), the following sections of National Secondary road have been identified as areas where this less restrictive approach will apply:

- N67 Ballyvaughan to Lisdoonvarna;
- N67 short section between the junction with the R483 and the junction with the R484;
- N67 Doonbeg to Kilkee; and,
- N67 Kilrush to Killimer.

The areas listed above are also identified in Volume 2 Maps of this plan. In these areas the Council will give consideration to developments requiring direct access onto national secondary roads for persons wishing to build a dwelling house for their own permanent residence on family land where the following is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority:

- There are no alternative sites available with access off a regional or local road;
- The development will not undermine the strategic transport function of the national road network, will not result in the premature obsolescence of the network, and where applicable will not compromise the carrying capacity at adjacent road junctions;
- The location of the proposed access is at a point on the National Road Network where there are no plans for future upgrades;
- All safety issues and considerations are adequately addressed in accordance with TII Publications;
- The development fully complies with the objectives set out in Chapter 4 of this plan – Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy;
- There is a genuine need for the dwelling proposed; and,
- The proposed development would not create an undesirable precedent for further development in the area.

The Planning Authority will develop and agree with TII a monitoring and recording regime related to planning permissions granted in accordance with the above provisions.

Development Plan Objective: Direct Access onto National Roads	
CDP 11.13	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To safeguard the safety, efficiency and carrying capacity of national primary and secondary roads, including associated national road junctions, within the county in line with national policy;</p> <p>b) To restrict individual accesses, and the intensification of existing access, onto national roads in order to protect the substantial investment in the national road network, to improve carrying capacity, efficiency and safety, and to prevent the premature obsolescence of the network;</p> <p>c) To assess development proposals requiring direct access onto the national road network having regard to the criteria set out in Section 11.2.9.3; and,</p> <p>d) To subject any proposals for greenways, new routes and trails to screening for appropriate assessment and an ecological impact assessment where appropriate to ensure that the design and operation of the proposal is in full compliance with the EU Habitats Directive.</p>

11.2.9.4 Strategic Regional Roads

Regional roads provide an important function in linking smaller towns and villages with the larger urban centres and with national primary and secondary routes. Where investment in a new regional road is proposed, in particular bypasses and relief roads, road space within the settlement served by the road shall be reallocated appropriately to sustainable modes, as a prerequisite to investment.

Developments requiring access onto key regional routes must be restricted in order to protect the capacity and safety of such routes.

There are several regional roads which have been selected by the Council as strategic routes that act as feeder routes based on the volumes of traffic that they carry on a daily basis. The Council will protect the identified strategic regional roads from a proliferation of access points and will ensure that their key function is retained.

Table 11.2 Strategic Regional Roads

Strategic Regional Roads	Location
R352	Ennis – Tuamgraney
R462	Sixmilebridge to Setright’s Cross
R463	Limerick – Killaloe – Tuamgraney
R465	Barry’s Cross to Broadford settlement boundary
R469	Ennis to Quin
R471	Cloverhill – Sixmilebridge
R476	Fountain Cross – Kilfenora
R478	Lahinch to Lisdoonvarna

Development Plan Objective:

Development of Strategic Regional Roads

CDP 11.14

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To seek funding for the delivery of and to upgrade and improve, where necessary, the Regional roads in the county as outlined in Table 11.2 and Table 11.3. The Council will have regard to national, regional and local transport plans and the Council’s own programme of works in this regard.
- b) To preserve the carrying capacity of strategic Regional roads and safeguard the investment in such infrastructure. Developments requiring direct access onto the strategic Regional roads identified in Table 11.2 will be restricted to the following categories:
 - i. Developments of strategic importance which, by their nature, are most appropriately located in a rural area;

	<p>ii. Developments located within settlement boundaries and residential clusters and where the 50kmph speed limit applies; and,</p> <p>iii. Rural dwellings which meet the following criteria -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. It must be clearly demonstrated that there is no reasonable alternative site with access off a minor road available; II. The development complies with the objectives as set out in Chapter 4 Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy; III. Full achievement of the sightline requirements for regional roads as set out in Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines; IV. The development does not undermine the strategic transport function of the strategic regional road network and where applicable does not compromise the carrying capacity at adjacent road junctions; and, V. The development/enhancement of the regional road network is in compliance with the environmental requirements of Objectives CDP 11.17 and CDP 3.3.
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11.2.9.5 Relief/Distributor Roads

The Council will seek to provide relief roads where necessary in towns and villages throughout the county as resources permit. Such roads will divert heavy volumes of traffic away from the core areas of towns and villages and will have regard to the need for access and road safety. The provision of such roads can also facilitate the organised expansion of towns and villages and have the capacity to cater for pedestrians and cyclists.

No new residential access points shall be permitted on the route of the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Road and the Killaloe Bypass when constructed.

Table 11.3 Proposed Projects Identified for Future Development

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limerick Northern Distributor Road (LNDR) – Knockalisheen to Shannon River Crossing – and university link road to the University of Limerick Clare Campus; • Western Bypass of Killaloe and River Shannon Bridge crossing south of Killaloe; • N67, N85 Road Improvement Scheme, Ennistymon; • Upgrade/extension of N19 to Shannon International Airport; • Realignment of sections of N85 Ennis–Ennistymon road; • Kilkee lower ring road linking the N67 at Kilkee Bay Hotel, running west to the Carrigaholt road, linking with the coast road; • Sixmilebridge Inner Relief Road;

- Relief Road from N68 Ennis Road at Kilrush to the N67 Killimer Road at Kilrush;
- Relief Road running to the north of the village of Corofin running from the Kilnaboy road to the Gort Road;
- Relief Road from N67 northeast of Lahinch to the N67 south of Lahinch;
- Road realignment on the N68 at Caherea;
- Bypass south of Ennistymon linking the N85 to the N67;
- Relief Road from N67 south of Miltown Malbay to the N67 northwest of the town;
- New routes southeast of Shannon linking Bóthar na Luachra with Slí an tSionnaigh and Bóthar na Lóiste; and,
- N67 Ballyvaughan to Lisdoonvarna Rd – works to facilitate the development of a footpath and cycleway.

Ennis and Environs Area:

- Northern Inner Relief Road - linking the Gort Road (R458) to the Tulla Road (R351);
- Link from Lahinch Road (N85) to Drumcliff Road (L4182);
- Link from Drumcliff Road (L4182) to Gort Road (R458);
- Link from Clon Road (R871) to Quin Road (R469);
- Arterial Road from Skehanagh Roundabout (N85) to Quin Road (R469); and,
- New interchange M18 Quin Road Ennis.

Development Plan Objective:

Proposed Projects identified for Future Development

CDP 11.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To integrate climate considerations and risk assessments into the design, planning and construction of all roads, footpaths, bridges, public realm and other construction projects and, where appropriate, to incorporate green infrastructure as a mechanism for carbon offset;</p> <p>b) To provide and/or facilitate the projects identified in Table 11.3 where necessary, and to ensure that such road infrastructure is designed and constructed to fulfil its intended purpose and to promote and support active travel;</p> <p>c) To ensure that the relevant mitigation measures contained in Volume 10 of this plan associated with the projects identified in Table 11.3 are strictly adhered to;</p> <p>d) Where investment in a new regional road is proposed, in particular bypasses and relief roads, road space within the</p>
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settlement served by the road shall be reallocated appropriately to sustainable modes, as a prerequisite to investment;

e) To progress the delivery of the LNDR;

f) That no new residential access points shall be permitted on the route of the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Road and the Killaloe Bypass when constructed.

g) To ensure that the design of the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Road, as it intersects the R464 in Parteen, is included within an overall masterplan for the village and provides for safe and adequate means of pedestrian and vehicular access and connectivity east and westwards within Parteen and across the route at this point;

h) To ensure that results from a detailed hydrological, hydrogeological and engineering assessment inform the design of the Limerick Northern Distributor Road and University Link Road to avoid any adverse effect on the existing hydrological and hydrogeological regime within the Knockalisheen Marsh area. The design of the River Shannon Bridge shall be informed by the overriding requirement to avoid adverse impacts on the qualifying interests of alluvial woodland otter and lamprey species when assessed under the Habitats Directive;

i) To ensure that the bridge abutments are set back a sufficient distance to allow for the retention of any existing riparian habitats or areas with the potential to develop into alluvial woodland. This will ensure maintenance of ecological connectivity on both banks for the River Shannon. The bridge deck shall be constructed at a sufficient height to allow for the continued development of any alluvial woodland present on both banks of the River Shannon such there will be no net loss of habitat;

j) To ensure that the Tailrace Canal, Errina Canal and River Blackwater are all crossed on clear span structures, with the abutments sufficiently set back from the watercourse banks to ensure maintenance of ecological connectivity;

k) To ensure that the necessary ecological assessment of the design of these bridges will be informed and supported by a detailed review and assessment of similar developments in comparably sensitive environments;

l) To ensure that all watercourse crossings, both culverts and bridges are designed so as to not impede the flood conveyance through the structure and not cause any significant change in flood levels, flow depths and velocities that would result in any noticeable increase in flood risk or



	<p>erosion/accretion locally in the vicinity of the crossing or more remotely both in the upstream or downstream reaches;</p> <p>m) To ensure that the proposed road is set at a minimum level that provides sufficient freeboard above the 100 year with climate change flood event (200 year combined tide event in respect of the Knockalisheen area) so as to have a low flood risk over its design life and sufficiently elevated for its storm drainage system to function appropriately during flood events;</p> <p>n) To ensure that the construction of the bridges is monitored by a suitably qualified ecologist, and that appropriate mitigation will be employed to avoid risks of pollution during both the construction and operational phases;</p> <p>o) To work with the National Parks and Wildlife Service to promote and develop sustainable visitor management initiatives to service the Burren National Park;</p> <p>p) To ensure that all mitigation measures set out in the NIR and SEA contained in Volumes 10(a) and 10(b) of this Plan are complied with; and,</p> <p>q) To ensure Inland Fisheries Ireland are consulted at early design stage and that compliance with Inland Fisheries Ireland Guidelines on the Protection of Fisheries During Construction Works in and Adjacent to Water (2016) or any subsequent updated versions is ensured.</p>
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Development Plan Objective: Regional and Local Road Developments	
CDP 11.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To achieve and maintain investment in the sustainable development of strategic priorities in regional and local roads subject to required appraisal, planning and environmental assessment processes; and,</p> <p>b) To support and facilitate the following projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Killaloe Bypass/R494 upgrade; • R471 access to Shannon Free Zone; and • L3126 to Bunratty Castle.

Development Plan Objective: Environmental Considerations in Road Construction Projects	
CDP 11.17	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that, for all major road construction projects, the route selection process will be informed by a constraints study, significant criteria for which will be environmental considerations in compliance with Objective CDP 3.3 of this plan, in addition to compliance with best practice guidelines from the Inland Fisheries Ireland, TII and relevant Government Departments.

11.2.10 Urban Roads and Streets

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) applies to streets and roads with a speed limit of 60 km/h or less and sets out a series of requirements, recommendations, and actions to ensure that streets and roads are safe, attractive and comfortable for all users. It requires professionals of different disciplines to work together to achieve better street design ensuring that the design must (a) be influenced by the type of place in which the street is located and (b) balance the needs of all users.

Development Plan Objective: Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS) and Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads	
CDP 11.18	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To implement the requirements and recommendations contained in DMURS in the assessment of development proposals, the preparation of design schemes and their implementation in the development of streets, roads and public realm improvement schemes in the county; and, b) To implement the requirements and recommendations contained in TII Publications Standard DN-GEO-03084 'The Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on National Roads' in the assessment of development proposals, the preparation of design schemes and their implementation in the development of streets, roads and public realm improvement schemes where applicable.

11.2.11 Shannon International Airport

Connectivity to and from Shannon International Airport is essential to ensure that the airport can continue to grow and make a significant contribution to the local, regional and national economy in the future. With regard to the international connectivity from Shannon International Airport, technological advances are being made to enhance the sustainability of

the aviation industry with new aircrafts being 70% more fuel efficient than 40 years ago and 75% quieter compared to 30 years ago.

Road connectivity to the airport is currently provided via the N19 National Road, which provides a link to the motorway network. The Council will support the upgrade of the N19 National Road during the lifetime of this plan.

Public transport links to the airport are also important to ensure the growth in passenger numbers using the airport. Clare County Council will support the further integration of airport services with both public and private bus services in the future.

See Section 6.7 Economic Development in Shannon, Chapter 6, for further information and detailed objectives for Shannon International Airport.

Public Safety Zones

Red Zones and Public Safety Zones (PSZs) are designated for Shannon International Airport and are located at the ends and approaches to the runway to provide for the safety of aircraft and people on the ground. In the assessment of planning applications in the vicinity of Shannon International Airport, Clare County Council will have regard to the Red Zones and PSZs identified for the airport.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon International Airport	
CDP 11.19	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the development of an Airport Strategy for the Southern Region to be prepared by the relevant stakeholders through consultation with the Department of Transport, Local Authorities, Airport Authorities, TII, the NTA and other relevant stakeholders in the Southern Region; b) To facilitate and support the development and enhancement of the strategic role of Shannon International Airport, to advocate for a regional distribution of air traffic and strategic route development, and for a greater regional focus by national agencies; c) To support actions which will progress the transition of Shannon International Airport to a low carbon future; d) To facilitate and support the further development of the Aviation Cluster at Shannon as recognised in National Aviation Policy and to work to ensure that cross agency cooperation will continue to develop the cluster to meet industry demand; e) To support and facilitate multi-modal inter-regional and intra-regional transport linkages to and from the airport by

	<p>both public and private service providers, with bus transport as the primary sustainable mode of transport;</p> <p>f) To safeguard current and future operational, safety, technical and development requirements of Shannon International Airport;</p> <p>g) To support and facilitate the upgrade of the Shannon Flood Relief Embankments to protect Shannon town, Shannon Free Zone and Industrial Estate, and Shannon International Airport;</p> <p>h) To have regard to, and implement, the national land use policies and guidance in relation to the Red Zones and Public Safety Zones for Shannon International Airport, the Irish Aviation Authority (Obstacles to aircraft in flight) Order, 2005 (S.I. No. 215/2005) and EASA Regulation (EU) No 139/2014;</p> <p>i) To have regard to the advice of the Irish Aviation Authority with regard to the effects of any development proposals in the vicinity of Shannon International Airport on the safety of aircraft or the safe and efficient navigation thereof;</p> <p>j) To have regard to the Irish Aviation Authority Policy Land Use Planning and Offshore Development (2015) in the assessment of relevant development proposals; and,</p> <p>k) To ensure that all proposals are in compliance with objective CDP 3.3 of this plan.</p>
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11.2.12 Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way constitute an important amenity and an economic and social asset. They enable enjoyment of the county’s high-quality landscape and are important for tourism development, recreation, and engagement with the county’s cultural heritage. In accordance with the requirements of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, Appendix 6 of this plan contains a list and maps of the public rights of way in County Clare that give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other place of natural beauty or recreational activity. Any consideration of public right of way extinguishments will have regard to RPO 152 of the RSES.

Development Plan Objective: Public Rights of Way	
CDP 11.20	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To encourage the preservation of the existing public rights of way within the county, as set out in Appendix 6.

11.2.13 Coastal and Estuarine Transportation

The water transport of goods and passengers between County Clare and the Aran Islands as well as between County Clare and County Kerry is well established. The operation of the

Killimer-Tarbert ferry service is an important resource for West Clare, providing a key economic and tourist link from County Kerry to the tourist routes along the west coast of County Clare. It is also important to both the Wild Atlantic Way and Shannon Estuary Way.

The ferry service operating from Doolin to the Aran Islands is also a key transport service which has been greatly enhanced by the development of a new pier at Doolin. Funding has been secured by the Council through the Governments Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) to progress the design and planning stage of the Doolin Pier Masterplan which will include a visitor services building, additional parking facilities and improved connectivity between the village and the pier.

The Shannon Estuary is a major international shipping hub. The activities that take place in the Shannon Estuary, both current and future, are considered in detail in Chapter 12 Shannon Estuary and Volume 9 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary of this plan.

Development Plan Objective: Water-Borne Transport	
CDP 11.21	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To safeguard and support the continued operation of the ferry services between West Clare and County Kerry and between North Clare and the Aran Islands. Only land use proposals that complement the sustainable operation of these services will be considered for the duration of this plan; b) To promote the establishment of a ferry or water taxi service between North Clare and Galway City; c) To support the provision of services and amenities for passengers in the vicinity of ferry departure/arrival points in the county; d) To support and facilitate the development and delivery of the Doolin Pier Masterplan during the lifetime of the plan; and, e) To ensure the development/enhancement of infrastructure facilitating water-borne transport is in compliance with the environmental requirements of objective CDP 3.3 of this plan.

11.2.14 Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers

The Council acknowledges the importance of ports, jetties, harbours, quays and piers to the local economy as well as their role as recreational and amenity facilities. The importance of establishing new marine infrastructure is also recognised. The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) is Ireland’s first maritime spatial plan and sets out how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas up to the year 2040 and beyond. It sits at the top of the hierarchy

of plans and sectoral policies for the marine area and provides a coherent framework in which sectoral policies and objectives can be realised. It is a decision-making tool for regulatory authorities and policy makers in a number of ways, including for decisions on individual consent applications which will have to have regard to the provisions of the NMPF in the same way that the development plan and other terrestrial plans form part of the decision making toolkit for land based planning applications. See Section 13.12, Chapter 13 of this plan for further information and detailed objectives relating to Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers.

Shannon Foynes Port Company

Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC), Ireland’s second largest port operation, has statutory jurisdiction over all marine activities on a 500km² area on the Shannon Estuary stretching from Kerry to Loop Head to Limerick City. The company provides a variety of services, from controlling navigation and marine safety, to warehousing, logistics and cargo handling. SFPC handle some of the largest vessels entering Irish waters, up to 200,000 dead weight tonnes (DWT). It is a port of national and international significance and has set out its 30-year masterplan ‘Shannon Foynes Port Company Vision 2041’ which aims to double port throughput to 20m tonnes per annum over the plan period.

In order to facilitate this growth, capacity enhancements are required within and external to the port, including:

- Ongoing expansion of jetty infrastructure (€47m);
- Reinstatement of Limerick to Foynes Rail line (€45m);
- Upgrade of Limerick to Foynes road network (€450m);
- New deep-water berth at Foynes Island (€175m).

Development Plan Objective: Ports and Harbours	
CDP 11.22	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support and facilitate the sustainable implementation of the National Ports Policy and the National Marine Planning Framework in County Clare;</p> <p>b) To support and facilitate the development and economic role of strategic international, national, regional and local harbours, ports and jetties across the county;</p> <p>c) To support the export, fisheries, marine tourism and marine economy potential of port and harbour assets at Cahiracon, Kilrush and Moneypoint subject to the implementation of mitigation measures outlined in the SEA and AA undertaken on the SIFP;</p> <p>d) To improve land-based transport links to ports and harbours;</p>

	<p>e) To support the development of a RSES Regional Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region; and,</p> <p>f) To ensure that all proposals will be in compliance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive where appropriate.</p>
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Development Plan Objective: Shannon Foynes Port	
CDP 11.23	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the continued expansion of Shannon Foynes Port in compliance with the environmental requirements of objective CDP 3.3 as it applies to County Clare;</p> <p>b) To support the capital infrastructure projects in the Shannon-Foynes Port Company Infrastructure Development Programme; and,</p> <p>c) To support Shannon Foynes Port Company Vision 2041 masterplan.</p>

11.2.15 Freight

While there has been significant investment in transport over the past 20 years, Ireland's growing population together with the continued growth in tourism numbers and freight traffic will place further demands on transportation infrastructure. The transport sector will require a significant modal shift from private carbon-fuel-using vehicles to sustainable transport. This will require a similar shift to more sustainable means of freight and logistics transport, including rail. The RSES states that the decarbonisation of transport will also focus on alternative and low emission fuels for vehicles for freight, a modal shift of freight to rail transport and the increased electrification of freight transport.

Development Plan Objective: Freight	
CDP 11.24	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the development of a RSES Regional Freight Strategy;</p> <p>b) To create an efficient freight network that operates in harmony with other transport users and land uses in the county;</p> <p>c) To encourage developments which are heavily dependent on road freight to locate where freight vehicles can access the national road network without the requirement to traverse urban areas;</p> <p>d) To support the use of the existing rail system and marine areas for the transport of appropriate materials where feasible; and,</p>

	e) To promote the use of low emission vehicles in the freight sector.
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11.2.16 Directional Signage

Directional signage is an essential component of transport infrastructure, ensuring that both visitors and residents of County Clare can conveniently and efficiently access settlements and services across the county. The Council will ensure that adequate directional signage is provided across the county and will seek to control the proliferation of non-road traffic signage. See Section 9.2.21 Tourism Signage and Appendix 1, Section A1.9 for further information and detailed objectives relating to signage.

Development Plan Objective: Directional Signage	
CDP 11.25	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that adequate directional signage is provided throughout the county to facilitate convenient movement and access between settlements and services through the county; and, b) To control the proliferation of non-road traffic signage on and adjacent to national roads having regard to the DECLG’s Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines for Planning Authorities.

11.3 Water Resources

Water covers 71% of the planet but only 1% is available to us as drinking water. We use this every day in our homes and businesses and water is a fundamental building block of life. Therefore, the quality of the water we use in our daily lives is of huge significance to our physical wellbeing and economic prosperity. The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, seeks to integrate the development plan process and water management through the requirement for development plans to have regard to the water services strategic plan for the area and to support the protection and enhancement of water quality, and compliance with environmental standards and objectives regarding water quality. Clare County Council is responsible for the protection and management of all waters in the county and also has an important role to play in the protection, maintenance, and improvement of water quality through the planning and management of future development.

11.3.1 Water Framework Directive (WFD)

The EU Water Framework Directive (WFD) sets out the approach to the protection and enhancement of the country’s water resources. The WFD applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters and aims to improve water quality. Clare County Council, in the preparation of this development plan, must comply with the provision of the

WFD and all other EU and National legislation and regulations in relation to water quality, waste management and the protection of habitats and species.

11.3.2 River Basin Management Plans

The WFD requires Ireland to produce both national and local River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). River Basin Management Plans are key tools for the implementation of the WFD, key European legislation which requires our rivers, lakes, groundwater and coastal water to achieve a healthy state, or what's known as 'good ecological status'. The National River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 outlines a programme of actions which aim to meet the environmental objectives and requirements of the WFD. The principal objectives of River Basin Management Plans include:

- To prevent further deterioration in water quality;
- To achieve the restoration of water bodies where they are currently at bad, poor or moderate status;
- To protect/enhance all waters including surface, ground, coastal and transitional waters;
- To manage water bodies based on river basins or catchments.

The River Basin Management Plans propose a program of measures to achieve the objective of high or good water quality status.

Development Plan Objective: Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management	
CDP 11.26	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate the implementation of the River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 and any subsequent plan for ground, surface, estuarine, coastal and transitional waters in the Plan area as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive;</p> <p>b) To protect groundwater and surface water resources in accordance with the statutory requirements and specific measures as set out in the River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027, and any subsequent management plans;</p> <p>c) To achieve and maintain at least good water quality status for all water bodies except where more stringent obligations are required such as Blue Dot/High Status Objective Water Bodies;</p> <p>d) To consider development proposals where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will meet the requirements of the River Basin Management Plan; and,</p> <p>e) To work with and support LAWPRO and support improvements/recommendations within Priority Areas for</p>

Action, Blue Dot/High Status Objective catchments and any additional areas identified within subsequent River Basin Management Plans.

11.3.3 Water Resources

Water resources are a key component of the natural environment. Water resources encompass a wide range of areas including drinking water, ground water, surface water, bathing water, shellfish waters, and freshwater pearl mussel waters, the management and protection of which are required under various relevant EU Directives. Unpolluted water resources are essential to human health, reliable water supply and the protection of habitats and species of importance in the county.

County Clare’s drinking water supply is derived from natural resources. It is crucial that water sources are protected so that dependable, good quality water supplies can be provided. Groundwater is a naturally occurring resource and it supplies approximately 20% of drinking water in Ireland. It supplies water to industry and agriculture and sustains wetlands and river flows during dry spells. Groundwater is increasingly at risk from pollution, particularly so from human activity.

The County Clare Groundwater Protection Scheme classifies the majority of Clare’s ground waters as having ‘Extreme Vulnerability’. The Groundwater Protection Scheme has been incorporated into the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland.

Development Plan Objective: Water Resources	
CDP 11.27	<p>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the protection and improvement of the quality of drinking water sources in line with the requirements of the Water Framework Directive; b) To ensure that developments that would have an unacceptable impact on water resources, including surface water and groundwater quality and quantity, designated sources protection areas, estuarine, coastal transitional waters, river corridors and associated wetlands will not be permitted; c) To ensure the efficient and sustainable use and development of water resources and water services infrastructure in order to manage and conserve water resources in a manner that supports a healthy society, economic development requirements and a cleaner environment; d) In areas of potable groundwater resources or over vulnerable aquifer areas, to consider development proposals only if the applicant can clearly demonstrate that

the proposed development will not pose a risk to the quality of the underlying groundwater;

e) To protect groundwater resources, in accordance with statutory requirements and specific measures as set out in the National River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027;

f) To work with and support Uisce Éireann, the Group Water Scheme Sector and LAWPRO in identifying public drinking water sources vulnerable to climate change and develop source protection or alternative sources, in order to maintain water quantity and quality levels;

g) To consider proposals for development which infringe on a river boundary, or an associated habitat, including their connection by groundwater, only where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- The character of the area will be conserved;
- An acceptable physical riparian zone will be maintained;

and,

- There will be no deterioration of water body status;

h) To work with Uisce Éireann to find a sustainable and long-term solution for the production, minimisation and beneficial reuse of water sludge as a by-product in order to minimise risk to human health and the environment.

11.3.4 Water Extraction from Lough Derg

Uisce Éireann (formerly Irish Water) assumed responsibility for managing Ireland’s water and wastewater investment and maintenance programmes on the 1st of January 2014. Simultaneously, Uisce Éireann also took over the management of a New Water Supply Project for the midlands and east of the Country and project planning is being undertaken by Uisce Éireann in this regard.

A carefully balanced approach needs to be achieved between meeting national priorities for water supply and addressing local concerns about the potential impacts of the proposed project. Clare County Council adopts the ‘precautionary principle’¹ from both a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Appropriate Assessment² (AA) perspective. The ‘precautionary principle’ in essence is about determining risk and taking preventative action in order to protect the environment. It is fundamental to SEA and AA and must be considered if potentially adverse environmental effects are identified through an evaluation of available scientific data or if there is sufficient scientific uncertainty.

¹ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/the-precautionary-principle.html>

² http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/natura_2000_asses_s_en.pdf

Development Plan Objective: Strategic Water Supply Projects	
CDP 11.28	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support investment and the sustainable development of strategic water supply projects of Uisce Éireann and leakage reduction programmes and initiatives through the National Water Resources Plan, the Eastern and Midland Regional Water Resources Plan and subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process;</p> <p>b) To carefully scrutinise any proposals for the abstraction of water from Lough Derg, either for storage or direct supply outside the county which, due to geographical proximity, may have a significant impact on County Clare taking into account the impacts of climate change and in particular low flow conditions which are now prevalent across the county throughout the year;</p> <p>c) To ensure that any abstraction proposals are in compliance with the environmental requirements of objective CDP 3.3 of this plan, and,</p> <p>d) To carefully scrutinise any proposals for the abstraction of water from Lough Derg or the River Shannon which may have an impact on the proposed South Clare/University of Limerick Economic Strategic Development Zone, an objective of which is the reopening of the Errina Canal.</p>

11.4 Water and Wastewater Services

The provision of a good quality water supply and effective wastewater disposal infrastructure are critical requirements for the future economic development, quality of life and sustainable growth of the county. The provision of adequate infrastructural capacity in areas of population growth, as identified in the Settlement Strategy, will allow for the plan-led future development of County Clare. The Council recognises that, in order to ensure land use policy is sustainable and for the development plan strategy to be realised, a coordinated and integrated approach to planning the provision of public utility services is crucial.

Uisce Éireann has responsibility for the provision and management of water supply and wastewater services. Clare County Council, through a Service Level Agreement with Uisce Éireann, manages the daily operation of infrastructure and the progression of capital projects. However, Uisce Éireann has responsibility for project prioritisation and financial investment. The Uisce Éireann Capital Investment Plan 2020 - 2024 sets out the priority projects to the year 2024. Priorities must include investment to ensure acceptable service levels to existing customers, to achieve regulatory compliance and to cater for future growth. In addition, minor upgrades and improvement works are continually carried out on a nationally prioritised basis through Uisce Éireann's National Programmes, for example capital maintenance and mains renewal programmes amongst others.

Development Plan Objective: Water Services	
CDP 11.29	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work closely with Uisce Éireann to identify and facilitate the timely delivery of the water services required to realise the development objectives of this plan; b) To facilitate the provision of integrated and sustainable water services through effective consultation with Uisce Éireann on the layout and design of water services in relation to the selection and planning of development areas and the preparation of masterplans; c) To ensure that adequate water services will be available to service development prior to the granting of planning permission and to require developers to consult Uisce Éireann regarding available capacity prior to applying for planning permission; and, d) To ensure that development proposals comply with Uisce Éireann’s standards and requirements in relation to water and wastewater infrastructure to facilitate the proposed development.

11.4.1 Water Supply

Drinking water in the county is drawn from a variety of sources and Figure 11.2 demonstrates the Household Water Supply Sources in County Clare in 2016. Uisce Éireann is responsible for providing and maintaining adequate public water supply infrastructure throughout county Clare. There are also a number of group schemes operating in the county. Public group water schemes manage their own networks but are supplied with treated water by Uisce Éireann. Private group schemes manage their own networks but in addition have their own private source that they are responsible for managing. In areas that are unserved by either a public water supply or a group water scheme, water supply comprises mainly of wells serving single dwellings. In the interest of safeguarding public health, the Council will restrict the boring of private wells for new developments in areas where a public water supply is available.

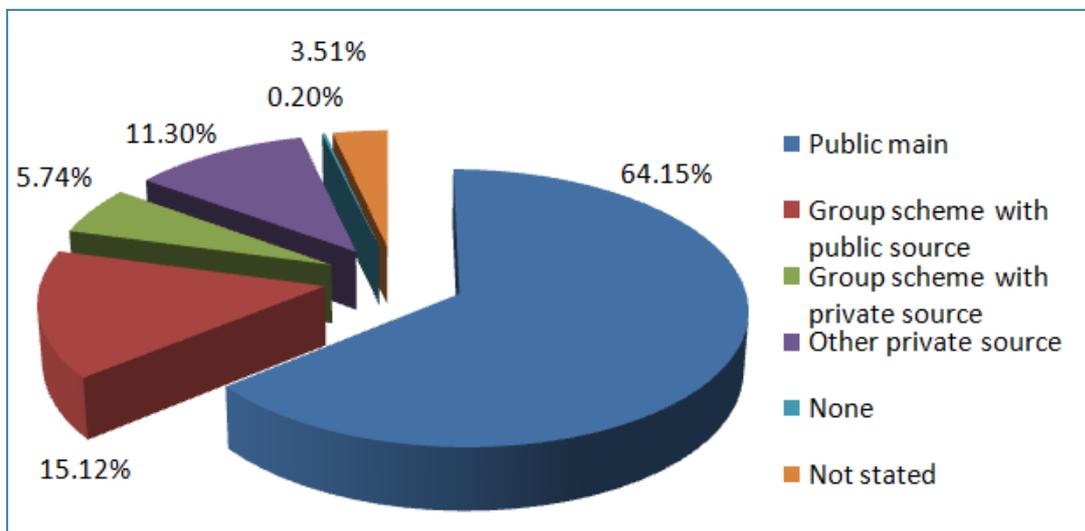
Water sludge is a by-product of water treatment and sludge management is an important issue. In addition to the National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan for the management of sludge derived from wastewater treatment processes Uisce Éireann is also preparing a sludge management plan for drinking water plants. Clare County Council will work with Uisce Éireann to find sustainable and long-term solutions for the production, minimisation and beneficial reuse of water sludge.

In general, there is sufficient water supply treatment capacity in the county to meet the needs of the target population identified in the Core Strategy. Many of the water treatment plants supply water to a number of settlements in a 'Water Supply Zone' (WSZ) and WSZ's may be

linked together to form a water resource zone. It is Uisce Éireann’s objective to interlink WSZs, where appropriate, to increase the resilience (reliability) of the water supply system. Network reinforcement is likely to be required to ensure that water supply can be moved around the network to where it is needed. In addition, many of the water treatment plants in the county need to be upgraded in order to ensure that water is produced to the required standards as set out in the relevant Drinking Water Regulations.

It is estimated that 42% of the water supplied in Ireland is lost as a result of leakage. Clean potable water is an important resource and therefore water conservation is essential to ensure security of supply in the future.

Figure 11.2 Household Water Supply Sources in County Clare (Source CSO 2016)



**Development Plan Objective:
Water Supply**

CDP 11.30	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the implementation of Uisce Éireann Investment Plans and to advocate the provision, by Uisce Éireann, of adequate water supply to accommodate the target population and employment potential of the county and in accordance with the statutory obligations set out in the EU and national policy and in line with the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy set out in this plan; b) To support the role of Uisce Éireann Investment Plans in taking into account seasonal pressures on critical water supply service infrastructure, climate change implications and leakage reduction in the design of all relevant projects; c) To advocate for the ongoing conservation and upgrade of water supply infrastructure in the county; d) To maximise the use of existing capacity in water supply services in the planning of new development;
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	<p>e) To protect existing way leaves and protection areas around public water supply services infrastructure through appropriate zoning and to facilitate the provision of appropriate sites for required water services infrastructure;</p> <p>f) To work with all stakeholders to promote water conservation and sustainable water usage;</p> <p>g) To promote and support the use of rainwater harvesting (in new buildings and as a retrofit) where viable; and,</p> <p>h) To prohibit the use of bored wells for water supply for new development in areas where a public supply is available.</p>
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11.4.2 Water Supply in the Ennis and Environs Area

In the Ennis and Environs area water is derived from a natural groundwater source at Drumcliff Springs, located to the north of the town. The Drumcliff water treatment plant supplies the Ennis Water Supply Zone (Ennis, Clarecastle, Barefield, Crusheen and Doora). Geological Survey Ireland has identified this water source as being ‘highly vulnerable’ and due regard will be had to this designation in the assessment of development proposals in the area. An exclusion zone, 200m in radius, has been established around the springs.

In order to meet the envisaged demand for water from the target population it is imperative that water storage is enhanced, water is conserved, and pipe network repairs are implemented. Pouladower Spring is located approximately 3km to the north of Ennis, rising at the northwest corner of Ballyallia Lough. This source will be investigated as a potential back-up supply/future supply to reduce dependency on Drumcliff Springs.

Development Plan Objective: Ennis and Environs Water Supply	
CDP 11.31	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To improve efficiency in the operation and demand management of the water supply infrastructure, promote water conservation and reduce the overall loss in public water supply in the Ennis and Environs area;</p> <p>b) To safeguard Pouladower Spring and investigate its use as a potential supply of water for the Ennis area. Any proposal with regard to the development of such a supply source shall demonstrate that it will not have a negative impact on European Sites;</p> <p>c) To advocate the provision, by Uisce Éireann, of an adequate water supply to accommodate the target population and the employment potential of the Ennis and Environs area in accordance with statutory obligations as set out by EU and National policy; and,</p>

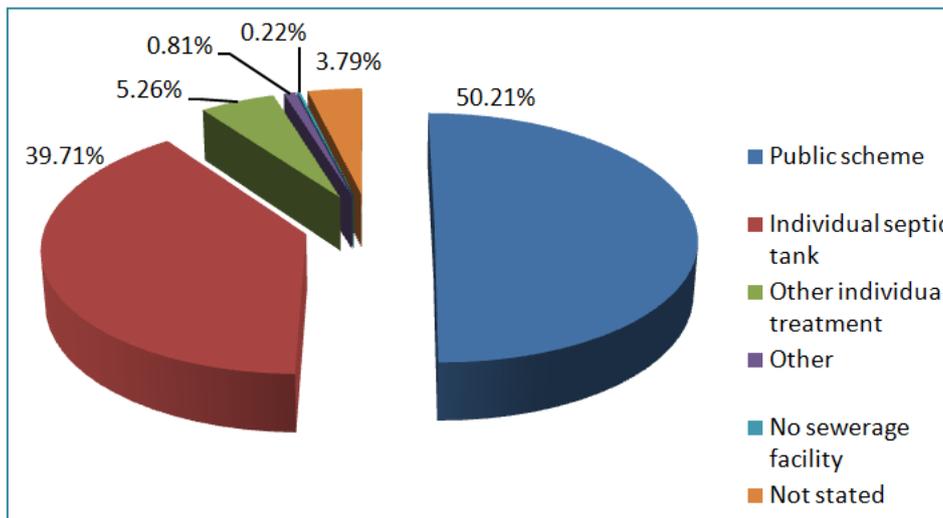
d) To protect the Drumcliffe Springs water resource including by not permitting development on either the Springs, or within the established 200 metre exclusion zone, notwithstanding development that may be required to maintain, upgrade or augment the existing water supply source and infrastructure, subject to proper planning and sustainable development.

11.4.3 Wastewater Management

Uisce Éireann has responsibility for the provision and management of wastewater facilities serving sewered towns and villages, including the management of storm water for combined sewers. The maintenance, upgrading and provision of the county’s wastewater drainage system is essential to accommodate future development requirements and to ensure the sustainable development and environmental protection of the county. At present there are significant service and compliance issues in many existing wastewater systems in County Clare. A number of treatment plant and network projects are being progressed under Uisce Éireann’s 2020-2024 Programme of Investment to address these issues.

Sludge is a by-product of wastewater treatment operations. To minimise risk to human health and the environment Clare County Council will work with Uisce Éireann in the implementation of the National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan for the management of sludge derived from wastewater treatment processes.

Figure 11.3 Types of Household Wastewater Systems in County Clare (Source CSO 2016)



Outside of the serviced towns and villages most developments in County Clare are served by individual proprietary wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks. Developments in these unserved areas must demonstrate that the on-site wastewater treatment system can safely and adequately dispose of effluent in accordance with the relevant EPA Code of Practice. In unserved areas, where developments require private wastewater treatment and disposal,

calculations should be submitted at application stage which demonstrate that the site is of sufficient size to safely assimilate the effluent from the development.

Development Plan Objective: Wastewater Treatment and Disposal	
CDP 11.32	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the implementation of Uisce Éireann Investment Plans and to advocate the provision, by Uisce Éireann, of adequate wastewater treatment facilities to accommodate the target population and employment potential of the county in accordance with the statutory obligations set out in the EU and national policy and in line with the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy set out in this plan; b) To support the role of Uisce Éireann Investment Plans in taking into account seasonal pressures on critical wastewater treatment service infrastructure and climate change implications in the design of all relevant projects; c) To advocate for the on-going provision, maintenance and upgrade of wastewater treatment infrastructure in the county; d) To maximise the use of the existing capacity of wastewater treatment services in the planning of new development; e) To protect existing way leaves and protection areas around public wastewater treatment services infrastructure through appropriate zoning and to facilitate the provision of appropriate sites for required wastewater treatment services infrastructure; f) To support Uisce Éireann in the promotion of effective management of trade discharges to sewers in order to maximise the capacity of the existing sewer networks and minimise detrimental impacts on sewage treatment works; g) To permit the development of single dwelling houses in unserviced areas only where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed wastewater treatment system is in accordance with the Code of Practice for Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (Population Equivalent \leq 10), EPA (2021); (h) Where settlements have no public wastewater treatment infrastructure, and in settlements which have limited or insufficient capacity to facilitate development, to consider alternative developer led/provided shared use wastewater treatment infrastructure, including those incorporating nature-based solutions, to serve



development where it can be clearly demonstrated that the system is in compliance with relevant EPA Guidelines on design standards and which will allow connection to a public system when it is provided. Any such consideration will be subject to the following criteria:

- i. Connection to an existing public wastewater treatment system is not currently available.
 - ii. Environmental and planning requirements are satisfied including plan adequacy, site suitability and a suitable means of sludge and treated effluent disposal.
 - iii. The land on which the treatment plant is located is transferred to Uisce Éireann on their request if/when a public system is provided.
 - iv. The management and maintenance of the shared wastewater treatment and disposal infrastructure following its completion shall be the responsibility of a legally constituted management company. This management company will be responsible for the adequate maintenance, operation and management of the shared infrastructure. It shall be a condition of sale of all elements of the permitted development that the purchaser become a shareholder in the management company and include a similar condition on any contract for subsequent disposal of the property.
 - v. Adherence to the environmental assessment criteria set out in section 11.4.3.1 of this plan.
 - vi. As a condition of grant of planning permission, new developments will be required to connect to the public network when connection becomes available, subject to a connection agreement with Uisce Éireann.
- i) To permit the development of treatment systems for small businesses/community facilities in unserved areas where they are in single ownership and where it is demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Planning Authority that the proposed wastewater treatment system is in accordance with Wastewater Treatment Manuals-Treatment Systems for Small Communities, Business, Leisure Centres and Hotels, EPA (1999) or any future versions;
 - j) To encourage and support a changeover from septic tanks/private wastewater treatment plants to public collection networks wherever feasible, subject to

connection agreements with Uisce Éireann and to ensure that any future development connects to the public wastewater infrastructure where it is available; and,
k) To ensure that any private wastewater treatment system proposed complies with the environmental requirements of Objectives CDP 3.3 of this plan.

11.4.3.1 Environmental Assessment Criteria:

It will be a requirement that it be demonstrated with scientific certainty that the construction, operation, maintenance, monitoring and decommissioning of any such developer led/provided shared use wastewater treatment infrastructure will not give rise to adverse effects on the site integrity of any European Sites in view of their conservation objectives and having regard to the characteristics of the species or habitat, including their structure, function, conservation status and sensitivity to change. Where this cannot be demonstrated with certainty, then developer led/provided shared use wastewater treatment infrastructure shall not be permitted. Nature-based solutions such as constructed wetlands (CWs) and integrated constructed wetlands (ICWs) will not be considered for:

- Settlements within areas of karst landscape,
- Areas deemed to be of high nature value or of high biodiversity value,
- Sites within 60m up-gradient of any well or spring used for potable water,
- Sites within the inner protection zone of a public groundwater supply source, where the vulnerability rating is classified as extreme,
- Sites within 300m up-gradient of a public supply (>10m³/day or >50 persons) borehole, where an inner protection zone has not been identified,
- Sites within 25m of a dwelling,
- Sites where construction of the ICW may negatively impact a site of cultural heritage value,
- Sites where adequate land area is not available,
- Sites near a watercourse (distances of not less than 10m from the initial and second ponds and no less than 5 m for subsequent ponds will be required),
- Sites that cannot be adequately protected from flood damage. A site-specific flood risk assessment will be required as part of any potential planning application for a Nature-based solution,
- Sites that pose an unacceptable risk to drinking water sources,
- Sites that conflict with the protection guidelines set out in the Clare Groundwater Protection Scheme.

In addition:

- An early assessment of a site's overall suitability and the properties/nature of the influent are required to avoid siting such Nature-based solutions in inappropriate settlements or areas within settlements.

- The assessment must determine whether the ICW discharges, either via surface or ground, to any SAC, SPA or NHA.
- In addition to the environmental function of an ICW, it is an essential requirement of the ICW concept to explicitly address the social, economic, and ecological considerations of the site, so that the needs of all stakeholders in the management of the land and water resources that are linked to a site need are given appropriate consideration. Regard must be had to all water quality discharges, achieving an appropriate landscape-fit and enhancing biological diversity.
- As the ICW concept is based on integration into the immediate and adjacent environment, site characterisation must investigate how this requirement can be achieved and optimised.
- The Management Company must ensure that the nature and properties of the influent are known, that adequate land space is available and that the system can operate with low or zero energy requirements.
- Given the nature of these systems in Ireland, potential developers must provide the Planning Authority with sufficient baseline information to enable planning/discharge conditions to be set should the Nature-based solution be deemed appropriate within the settlement for a specific site.
- The Management Company will be required to put in place an Emergency Response Plan for the system which will outline the procedures which must be put in place should monitoring indicate exceedances of emissions limit values, where a failure in the system occurs, where the system becomes inundated due to severe or adverse weather conditions or through inappropriate influent amongst other occurrences.

Development Plan Objective:

Strategic Wastewater Treatment Projects

CDP 11.33

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- To support investment in and the sustainable development of strategic wastewater treatment facilities by Uisce Éireann in County Clare arising from initiatives including Investment Plans and Strategic Drainage Area Plans subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process;
- To liaise with Uisce Éireann to ensure adequate wastewater treatment facilities are available to accommodate population growth in the county;
- To ensure that the assimilative capacity of the receiving environment is not exceeded and that increased wastewater discharges from population growth does not contribute to degradation of water body status or give rise to adverse impacts on the integrity of the Natura 2000 network;
- To support Uisce Éireann to eliminate untreated discharges from settlements in the short-term, while planning strategically for the long-term in tandem with

	<p>Project Ireland 2040 and the RSES and in increasing compliance with the requirements of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive;</p> <p>e) To support and facilitate the separation of foul and surface water networks in the county; and</p> <p>f) To liaise with Uisce Éireann to identify wastewater treatment plants which are subject to flooding from severe weather events, and to advocate for the prioritisation of these plants for suitable upgrades.</p>
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**Development Plan Objective:
Rural Wastewater Treatment Programmes**

CDP 11.34	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support investment in the sustainable development of rural waste water treatment programmes and the initiatives of Uisce Éireann, communities and developers in small rural settlements to identify sustainable solutions subject to available funding for such services including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund of the NDP and the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2022-2025 Measure 8 – Waste Water Collection and Treatment Needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services.</p> <p>b) To support the provision of centralised wastewater treatment plants at Broadford, Carrigaholt, Cooraclare, Doolin and Labasheeda within the lifetime of this plan;</p> <p>c) To support the servicing of rural villages (serviced sites), in settlements with adequate public wastewater treatment capacity available, to provide an alternative to one-off housing in the countryside; and,</p> <p>d) To ensure that any private wastewater treatment system proposed complies with the environmental requirements of Objectives CDP 3.3 of this plan.</p>
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11.4.4 Storm Water Management

Storm water can be described as rainwater that falls onto a property or accumulates on the ground and runs off to a storm drain. Storm water increases significantly as a result of developments where permeable surfaces (vegetation and soil) are replaced by impermeable surfaces (car parks, roads, driveways and roofs). The management of combined sewers falls within the remit of Uisce Éireann.

The management of storm water is inherently linked to the wider issues of climate change adaptation and flood risk management. All new development throughout the county will be required to minimise surface water discharge through on-site systems such as Sustainable

Drainage Systems (SuDS). Development proposals are required to demonstrate the use of SuDS mechanisms and must be accompanied by a comprehensive SuDS assessment to demonstrate run off quantity, quality, and an assessment on the potential impacts on habitats and water quality. See Section 2.8.1 Storm Water Management, Chapter 2, of this plan for further information and detailed objectives relating to storm water.

11.5 Waste Management

The environment is a valuable but vulnerable resource. When it is managed and protected, the quality and integrity of the environment is retained. In conjunction with other state agencies, Clare County Council has the responsibility for a wide range of activities associated with the environment. In particular, the Council seeks to regulate and monitor pollution control and waste management.

11.5.1 Waste Management Plans

Clare County Council, in conjunction with the other local authorities in the Southern Region, has a role in the implementation of the A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025 and the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021. The Council will also have a role in implementing the upcoming National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPCE), which will be the successor to the Southern Region Waste Management Plan. The strategic vision of the Southern Region Waste Management Plan is to rethink our approach to managing waste, by viewing our waste streams as valuable material resources. The plan provides a framework for the prevention and management of waste in a safe and sustainable manner. The plan targets are:

- 1% reduction in the quantity of household waste generated per capita over the period of the plan;
- Achieve a recycling rate of 50% of managed municipal waste by 2020; and,
- Reduce to 0% the direct disposal of unprocessed residual municipal waste to landfill (from 2016 onwards) in favour of higher value pre-treatment processes and indigenous recovery practices.

The Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region, 2020 echoes these sentiments and aims to move away from the traditional unsustainable linear model where resources are consumed, and high waste volumes are generated which are then sent to be processed as waste. As at national level, policy is now focused on building a circular economy.

The European Commission’s new circular economy plan ‘A New Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner more competitive Europe’ was launched in 2020 and forms one of the main blocks of the European Green Deal.

Through the development of a circular waste economy, there will be opportunities for enterprise and employment. Clare County Council will support and promote circular economy principles prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling, and recovery, to support a healthy

environment, economy and society. Clare County Council is also committed to implementing the provisions of the framework set out in the Southern Region Waste Management Plan, and to implementing the upcoming National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPC), which will be the successor to the Southern Region Waste Management Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Waste Management	
CDP 11.35	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support and facilitate the implementation of the EU circular economy action plan ‘A New Circular Economy Action Plan For a cleaner more competitive Europe’ (2020), the EU Raw Material Initiative, A Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy – Ireland’s National Waste Policy 2020-2025 and the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015-2021; b) To support and promote circular economy principles prioritising prevention, reuse, recycling and recovery, to support a healthy environment, economy and society; c) To encourage and facilitate the development of new options and technological advances in relation to waste management; d) To support the development of waste recycling facilities at appropriate locations in County Clare as a means of facilitating a reduction in the quantity of waste that goes to landfill disposal sites; e) To promote environmental awareness measures and action programmes to ensure good environmental awareness and practices, the recycling of waste, water management, and energy conservation; f) To have regard to Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Resource Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects (EPA 2021) and any subsequent guidelines in the management of waste from construction and demolition projects and to require the submission of a construction and demolition waste management plan for projects in excess of the following thresholds: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New residential developments of 10 houses or more, • Other new developments, including institutional, educational, health and other public facilities, with an aggregate floor area in excess of 1,250m²; • Demolition/renovation/refurbishment projects generating in excess of 100m³ in volume of construction and demolition waste; • Civil engineering projects producing in excess of 500m³ of waste, excluding waste materials used for development works on the site.

	<p>The Council may also require the submission of construction and demolition waste management plans for other developments, and this will be managed through the pre-planning consultation and planning application processes;</p> <p>g) To require proposals for brownfield regeneration in strategic locations to be accompanied by a site risk assessment and a clear waste plan for any wastes arising, including consideration of hazardous or contaminated material; and,</p> <p>h) To support and facilitate the repurposing of previous landfill sites and where appropriate their reuse for community or recreational purposes.</p>
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11.5.2 Waste Transfer and Recovery

Waste transfer facilities/material recovery facilities are essential infrastructure to support the recycling of waste. In the assessment of applications for waste transfer facilities/material recovery facilities, the following site characteristics are preferable:

- Within or as near as possible (within 2km) to the defined Metropolitan Town, Key Town or Service Town as defined in the Settlement Hierarchy;
- Where practical, on the national or regional road network and where traffic considerations are acceptable;
- In a central location within their general catchment in order to minimise road hauls;
- If possible, in an area close/proximate to existing business operations;
- Where impacts on local amenities can be minimised; and
- Where the natural features, for example, geology, hydrology, minimise pollution risks.

Clare County Council will facilitate the sustainable provision of additional waste facilities at appropriate locations in accordance with the Waste Management Infrastructure Guidance for Siting Waste Management Facilities. This guidance will be included in the upcoming National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy (NWMPCE), which will replace the Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2015 - 2021 and the regional waste management plans for the other two regions.

Development Plan Objective: Waste Transfer and Recovery Facilities	
CDP 11.36	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the development of waste transfer and recovery facilities at appropriate locations in County Clare as a means of facilitating a reduction in the quantity of waste that goes to landfill disposal sites; and,</p> <p>b) To support the development of higher-value waste pre-treatment processes and indigenous recovery practices. Such developments must not adversely affect species or habitats designated by the Habitats Directive and shall</p>

	comply with the requirements of the National River Basin Management Plan.
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11.5.3 Litter Management

Clare County Council has prepared a Litter Management Plan for the period 2022-2024 which sets out objectives for the prevention and minimisation of litter throughout the county.

Development Plan Objective: Litter Management	
CDP 11.37	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To implement the provisions of the Clare County Litter Management Plan 2022-2024 and any updated version of this Plan.

11.5.4 Construction and Demolition Waste

Construction and demolition waste (C&D waste) is generally associated with waste materials arising from construction, demolition, and renovation activities. Landfills were traditionally the main receiving points for the disposal of waste associated with construction and demolition building materials but reuse and recycling of C&D waste is now recognised as a more sustainable alternative. The most recent figures from the Southern Region Waste Management Plan indicate that 95% of construction and demolition (C&D) is being reused or recycled.

Developments should, where appropriate, seek to reuse excavated material from sites for landscaping and land restoration or alternatively the material should be reused in the building process. Also, waste management plans should demonstrate how C&D waste is segregated at site so that it can be reused, recycled, or disposed of in an appropriate way. Where construction or demolition wastes cannot be reused or recycled, that waste must be transported to authorised waste facilities using the services of authorised waste collectors.

Development Plan Objective: Construction and Demolition Waste	
CDP 11.38	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To require that a C&D Waste Management Plan is prepared by the developer having regard to the 'Best Practice Guidelines for the Preparation of Resource Management Plans for Construction & Demolition Projects' (EPA 2021) and any subsequent guidelines for new construction or demolition projects and to require that where appropriate the maximum amount of waste material generated on site is reused and recycled;

	<p>b) To promote the production and reuse of aggregates from C&D waste and their use in construction projects in the Region; and,</p> <p>c) To encourage the development of C&D waste recycling facilities at suitable sites, including quarries, subject to normal planning and environmental considerations.</p>
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11.5.5 Agriculture Waste

The Nitrates Directive (91/676/EEC) calls for the protection of water from excessive nitrates which make it unsuitable for use as drinking water. The Directive, as implemented in Ireland’s Nitrates Action Programme through the EC (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations 2009 (as amended 2010, 2014 and 2017) is the main statutory provision which places an onus on Ireland to prevent pollution of groundwater and surface water from nitrates associated with agricultural sources. The programme is designed to prevent pollution of surface waters and ground water from agricultural sources and to protect and improve water quality. Waste arising from agricultural practices on farms should be dealt with in a safe and sustainable manner having regard to the protection of the environment and public safety implications associated with inappropriately disposed waste.

Development Plan Objective: Agricultural Waste	
CDP 11.39	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that the disposal of agricultural waste is carried out in a safe, efficient and sustainable manner having regard to the environment and to the health and safety of individuals, and in compliance with the European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2017, the Litter Pollution Act 1997 (as amended) and the European Communities (Water Policy) Regulations 2014 (S.I. No. 350 of 2014).</p>

11.6 Noise, Air and Light Pollution

11.6.1 Noise Pollution

Noise pollution can occur in various locations: building sites, heavily trafficked roads, and industrial sites amongst others, all of which can have significant impacts on an environment and on the quality of life of individuals, residential areas and communities in the vicinity. Clare County Council has set out measures to deal with noise pollution associated with major noise sources, such as transportation infrastructure, in the Clare Noise Action Plan (2018). This is a five-year strategic document published under the Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC, as implemented in Ireland by the Environmental Noise Regulations 2006.

Development Plan Objective:

Noise Pollution	
CDP 11.40	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To promote the proactive management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse impacts on health and the environment; and, b) To ensure that all proposals for development with regard to transportation infrastructure shall comply with the provisions of the Clare Noise Action Plan (2018) and any subsequent plans.

11.6.2 Air Quality

Air pollution can potentially affect the health and well-being of sensitive population groups and ecosystems and can also have adverse environmental and economic impacts. The EU introduced a legislative framework to oversee the monitoring, assessment and management of air quality, namely Directive 2008/50/EC on Ambient Air Quality and Cleaner Air for Europe. This directive was implemented in Ireland under the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2011.

Radon, a radioactive gas formed in the ground by the radioactive decay of uranium, which is present in all rocks and soils, is categorised by the World Health Organisation as a carcinogen. It is important to comply with best practice in the implementation of radon prevention measures in partnership with other relevant agencies. See Section 5.2.17, Chapter 5 of this plan for further information and detailed objectives relating to radon gas and housing.

Development Plan Objective: Air Quality	
CDP 11.41	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To achieve and maintain good air quality and help prevent harmful effects on human health and the environment in our urban and rural areas; b) To support local data collection in the development of air quality monitoring; and, c) To implement the provisions of national policy and air pollution legislation, in conjunction with other agencies as appropriate.

11.6.3 Light Pollution

It is recognised that adequate lighting is necessary to ensure a safe and secure environment. However, light spillage from inadequately designed lighting is increasingly recognised as a potential nuisance to nearby properties and a threat to wildlife and their habitats particularly in relation to European Sites. It can also be a waste of energy and can reduce the visibility of the night sky. Both urban and rural settings are affected by light pollution.

Development Plan Objective: Light Pollution	
CDP 11.42	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To require proposals for development that include the provision of external lighting, to clearly demonstrate that the lighting scheme is the minimum needed for security and working purposes; b) To ensure that external lighting and lighting schemes are designed so that the incidence of light spillage is minimised ensuring that the amenities of adjoining properties, wildlife and the surrounding environment are protected; and, c) To require that external lighting is designed taking the Bat Conservation Ireland Guidance Notes, Bats and Lighting Guidance Notes for Planners, Engineers, Architects and Developers, into consideration, together with EUROBATS Guidelines for consideration of bats in lighting projects.

It is not intended that objectives set out will unreasonably constrain the operations of Shannon International Airport nor of other regionally important industrial activities in the county.

11.7 SEVESO – Major Accidents Directive

The SEVESO III Directive (2012/18/EU) came into force in Ireland on 1st June 2015 replacing the Seveso II Directive, 96/82/EC. This is the main EU legislation dealing with the control of onshore major accident hazards involving dangerous substances. The Directive is implemented in Ireland through the Chemicals Act (Control of Major Accident Hazards involving Dangerous Substances) Regulations 2015.

The Directive covers establishments where dangerous substances may be present (e.g. during processing or storage) in quantities above a certain threshold. A Major Accident Hazard Site (SEVESO Site) is a site where the occupier has notified the Health and Safety Authority that they meet or exceed a specified threshold. Excluded from the Directive are certain industrial activities which are subject to other legislation providing a similar level of protection e.g. nuclear establishments or the transport of dangerous substances.

There are a number of companies in County Clare which are within the remit of the SEVESO III Directive. The aim is to prevent major accidents and/or limit their consequences ensuring high levels of protection for the community in a consistent and effective manner. There are two tiers of industries, depending on the quantity of substances used, handled or stored on site. The existing SEVESO Sites within the plan area include:

Upper Tier

- ESB Generating Station, Moneypoint
- Shannon Aviation Fuels, Shannon International Airport

Lower Tier

- Enva Ireland Ltd, Shannon

Clare County Council is required to seek technical advice from the Health and Safety Authority, which acts as the Central Competent Authority, in relation to any planning application directly pertaining to a SEVESO Site or within ‘consultation distance’ of these establishments. Technical guidance relating to HSA policy is provided for in Guidance on technical land-use planning advice– For planning authorities and COMAH established operators (2023).

Development Plan Objective: SEVESO III Directive	
CDP 11.43	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To control the following for the purposes of reducing the risk or limiting the consequences of a major accident (regard will be had to the provisions of the SEVESO III Directive and any regulations, under any enactment, giving effect to that Directive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The siting of Major Accident Hazard sites; • The modification of an existing Major Accident Hazard site; or, • Specified development in the vicinity of a Major Accident Hazard site.

11.8 Energy and Communications

The provision of high quality and reliable energy and communications infrastructure is essential for County Clare in terms of attracting and retaining high-tech economic investment, maintaining a high quality of life and reducing our dependence on fossil fuels so that climate change targets are met. Demand for energy has continued to increase in line with population and economic growth. The greenhouse gases produced in energy production and use are one of the major contributors to climate change and a transformation of our energy system is required to meet National, European, and International climate policy objectives.

11.8.1 Energy Strategy

An efficient and secure energy supply is essential to the future growth and sustainable development of County Clare. Reliable and low-cost energy is essential for a high quality of life for the residents of County Clare and to ensure that the county is an attractive place in

which to do business. However, it is essential to ensure that energy demands are met without compromising environmental quality. Energy efficiency, renewable energy development and progression towards a carbon neutral economy are therefore central themes of this plan.

11.8.2 Energy Security

The ability to deliver a secure and uninterrupted sustainable energy supply at a competitive cost is critical to County Clare’s ability to continue to provide a supportive environment for industry and innovation and to attract and retain high levels of foreign direct investment. Clare County Council will promote the implementation of the Clare County Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2030 (in Volume 5 of this plan) and will facilitate the development of a range of sustainable forms of energy creation within the county in order to ensure a secure and effective supply of energy.

The Shannon Estuary is identified as a key asset in developing a diverse and secure energy supply in the Region. Significant potential exists to harness the sustainable development of renewable energy sources to assist in meeting renewable energy targets, as set out in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. Clare County Council recognises that the growth of the offshore renewable energy sector and the ESB’s ‘Green Atlantic’ project present significant opportunities for the Shannon Estuary in respect of new infrastructure and supply chain developments. The Shannon Estuary is well placed to capture a significant share of this market and to become a focal point for the offshore wind industry in Europe. See Chapter 2 Climate Action, Chapter 12 Shannon Estuary and Volume 9 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary for further information and detailed objectives relating to Energy.

The SIFP identifies four sites within the Shannon Estuary that are of strategic significance in nationally and regionally in terms of their contribution to the security and diversity of energy supply and further economic potential. The four sites of strategic significance are:

- Moneypoint;
- Tarbert;
- Tarbert-Ballylongford land bank; and,
- Aughinish Alumina.

Development Plan Objective: Energy Security	
CDP 11.44	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To promote and facilitate the sustainable development, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and gas network grid infrastructure, to integrate renewable energy sources, thereby creating a secure and efficient energy supply and storage system for County Clare which is ready to meet increased demand as the regional economy grows.

11.8.3 Electricity Network

The provision of a secure and adequate electricity infrastructure is essential to meet the growth in demand and to ensure that an efficient and reliable electricity supply is available to households, business and industry. A strong transmission grid is essential to attract and retain high tech industrial investment, to ensure competitive energy supplies, to achieve balanced development, to reduce dependency on fossil fuels, and, to achieve climate change targets.

Moreover, to attract renewable energy development it is important for County Clare that the existing grid infrastructure is reinforced where necessary and expanded to areas not adequately serviced. Clare County Council will continue to work closely with EirGrid to facilitate the ongoing development of the grid infrastructure in line with national, regional and local requirements.

EirGrid is currently progressing a number of projects to accommodate various energy generators and reinforce the National Grid and a new submarine 400kV cable to connect Moneypoint to North Kerry on the southern side of the Shannon Estuary has recently been permitted by An Bord Pleanála. Another project involves works at Moneypoint which allow the increased use of the capability of the existing 400kV overhead lines.

Development Plan Objective: Electricity Networks	
CDP 11.45	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate improvements in energy infrastructure and encourage the expansion of the infrastructure within the county; b) To facilitate future alternative renewable energy developments and associated utility infrastructure throughout the county; c) To support the Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM) as a key priority for the Southern Region and the sustainable development and reinforcement of the energy grid including grid connections, transboundary networks into and through County Clare subject to appropriate environmental assessment and planning processes; d) To collaborate with EirGrid to facilitate the development of a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity, enhanced electricity networks and new transmission infrastructure projects that might be brought forward in the lifetime of this Plan under EirGrid's (2017) Grid Development Strategy (subject to appropriate environmental assessment and the planning process); e) To collaborate with EirGrid over the lifetime of the plan to ensure that the county's minimum target of 1,167MW of renewable energy generation is achieved and can be

	<p>accommodated on the electricity network in County Clare; and,</p> <p>f) To have regard to environmental and visual considerations in the assessment of developments of this nature and ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of objective CDP 3.3 of this plan.</p>
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11.8.4 Gas Networks

Gas Infrastructure has an important role to play in the development of renewable energy. It can facilitate future renewable energy development by providing reserve fuel for heat and power facilities otherwise provided by renewable resources, in a local and national context. The planned investment by the ESB at Moneypoint in green hydrogen production, storage and subsequent energy generation is an example of how the security of energy supply from renewable sources can be addressed.

Gas Networks Ireland (GNI) has published a long-term strategy document named ‘Vision 2050’ which envisages that the national gas network will evolve to become net zero carbon by 2050 and in doing so will support emissions reductions across every sector of the Irish economy. GNI owns and operates the gas transmission pipeline running from north to south through County Clare and the adjoining wayleaves. Gas Networks Ireland also applies a 400 metre ‘Zone of Interest’ corridor to the gas pipeline whereby the nature and scale of all developments outside the wayleaves are monitored to ensure compliance with current codes of practice.

Development Plan Objective:	
Gas Networks	
CDP 11.46	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate the delivery and expansion of the natural gas infrastructure throughout the county for both domestic and business/industry use and to have regard to the location of existing gas infrastructure in the assessment of planning applications;</p> <p>b) To promote renewable gas leading to carbon emission reductions in agriculture, industry, heating and transport as well as sustainable local employment opportunities;</p> <p>c) To support the production and storage of green hydrogen and the transition of the gas network to a carbon neutral gas network by 2050, which will assist County Clare, the Region and Ireland in becoming a low carbon society;</p> <p>d) To support investment in the sustainable development of the agricultural biogas sector and regional gas supply projects which strengthen gas networks in the region and assist integration of renewable gas with the grid network;</p>

- e) To support investment in developing renewable gas and provision of a CNG refuelling infrastructure which will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions in both the agriculture and transport sectors and support carbon capture and storage initiatives, which have the potential to decarbonise power generation at scale;
- f) To facilitate the strengthening of the gas network sustainably to service settlements and employment areas in County Clare and to facilitate progress in developing the infrastructures to enable strategic energy projects in the county including those identified in the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (SIFP); and,
- g) To ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of objective CDP 3.3 of this plan.

11.8.5 Renewable Energy Sources

The global climate is changing and increased levels of atmospheric greenhouse gases which are attributable for the most part to the burning of fossil fuels are accelerating this change. The policy context for the requirement to transition to a carbon neutral society by 2050 is set out in Section 2.3 of this Plan. By 2030 Ireland must achieve 70% of power generation from renewable energy sources, whilst by 2050 Ireland must achieve carbon neutrality. Whilst County Clare currently has the capacity to provide sufficient energy from renewable energy sources to meet demand within the county, the achievement of these challenging targets at the Regional and National levels will require both an increase in renewable generation and a phasing out of coal and peat fired electricity generation plants. It will also require the strengthening of the energy storage and electricity transmission networks to manage the intermittent nature of renewable energy sources.

The term ‘renewable energy’ refers to those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment including from the sun, wind, oceans, and the fall of water. Geothermal energy, plant material and combustible or digestible agricultural, domestic, or industrial waste may also be regarded as renewable sources of energy.

A Renewable Energy Strategy and Wind Energy Strategy have been prepared for County Clare and comprise Volumes 5 and 6, respectively, of this plan. The Clare Wind Energy Strategy identifies the optimum locations for wind energy developments in the county having regard to environmental and geographical constraints and the protection of the amenities of local residents. An updated Wind Energy Strategy will be prepared upon the publication of the update to the Wind Energy Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006.

The Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 outlines the potential for a range of renewable resources, including bioenergy and anaerobic digestion, micro-renewables, combined heat and power, geothermal, solar, hydro, energy storage, onshore and offshore, wave and tidal energy. It acknowledges the significant contribution that they can make to

County Clare in terms of energy security, reduced reliance on traditional fossil fuels, enabling future energy exports and meeting assigned targets.

Large scale renewable energy projects should seek to provide a community gain element in establishing such infrastructure in local areas as outlined in the Programme for Government. The National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030 outlines the need to facilitate community participation and to support up to 10% community renewable electricity projects by 2030.

Development Plan Objective: Renewable Energy	
CDP 11.47	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To encourage and to favourably consider proposals for renewable energy developments, including community owned developments, and ancillary facilities in order to meet National, Regional and County renewable energy targets, and to facilitate a reduction in CO2 emissions and the promotion of a low carbon economy; b) To assess future renewable energy-related development proposals having regard to the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 in Volume 5 of this plan and associated SEA and AA; c) To support the sustainable development of renewable wind energy (onshore and offshore) at appropriate locations and of its related grid infrastructure in County Clare, in accordance with all relevant policies, guidance and guidelines pertaining to the protection of the environment and protected habitats and species, and to assess proposals having regard to the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in Volume 6 of this plan and the associated SEA and AA, or any subsequent updated adopted strategy and to National Wind Energy Guidelines; d) To prepare a new and updated Wind Energy Strategy for County Clare during the lifetime of this plan, subject to the publication of the update to the Wind Energy Development Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2006; e) To strike an appropriate balance between facilitating renewable and wind energy-related development and protecting the residential amenities of neighbouring properties; f) To support and facilitate the development of new options and technological advances in relation to renewable energy production and storage, that may emerge over the lifetime of this plan; g) To support the integration of indigenous renewable energy production and grid injection;

	<p>h) To ensure that all proposals for renewable energy developments and ancillary facilities in the county are in full compliance with the requirements of the SEA and Habitats Directives and objective CDP 3.3 of this plan; and,</p> <p>i) To promote and market the county as a leader of renewable energy provision.</p>
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**Development Plan Objective:
Renewable Energy Strategy**

CDP 11.48	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support implementation of the National Renewable Energy Action Plan (NREAP), and the Offshore Renewable Energy Plan including mitigation measures outlined in their respective SEA and AA and promote County Clare and the Southern Region as a leader and innovator in sustainable renewable energy generation; and,</p> <p>b) To support the implementation of the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 in Volume 5 of this plan; and,</p> <p>c) To support the development of a Regional Renewable Energy Strategy with relevant stakeholders.</p>
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**Development Plan Objective:
Renewable Offshore Energy**

CDP 11.49	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To work with relevant stakeholders in terms of offshore renewable energy development, environmental monitoring, and awareness of the benefits of realising the county and region’s offshore energy potential. Initiatives arising from this objective shall be subject to robust feasibility and site selection processes in advance of any development, which will include explicit consideration of likely significant effects on European Sites and potential for adverse effects on the integrity of European Sites.</p>
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**Development Plan Objective:
Power Stations and Renewable Energy**

CDP 11.50	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support the sustainable technology upgrading and conversion of power stations in the county including Moneypoint to the use of energy efficient and renewable energy sources; and,</p> <p>b) To support the redevelopment of the Moneypoint power generation station site as a green energy hub subject to the</p>
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	requirements of the Habitats and Birds Directive, Water Framework Directive, and all other relevant EU Directives.
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11.8.6 Energy Storage

Renewable energy resources are typically available on an intermittent basis. An ability to store energy generated from renewable resources increases the quantity of low carbon energy harnessed and the efficiency of the electricity system. Clare County Council recognises the importance of renewable energy storage, particularly green hydrogen gas storage and pumped freshwater hydro energy storage, in meeting its targets in respect of renewable electricity generation. Energy storage is addressed in greater detail in the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2029 (Volume 5 of this Plan).

Development Plan Objective: Energy Storage	
CDP 11.51	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support and facilitate the development of secure, appropriately scaled energy storage facilities, particularly green hydrogen gas storage and pumped freshwater hydro energy storage, at suitable locations throughout the county, in compliance with the requirements of objective CDP 3.3 of this plan; and, b) To support initiatives to develop innovation, advances in technology and pilot projects for the sustainable development of energy storage and carbon capture within the region and to work with key stakeholders in developing sustainable forestry to support carbon sequestration and enhance biodiversity.

11.8.7 Energy Efficiency and Conservation

The introduction of renewable energy and innovative technologies alone cannot reduce our dependence upon imported fossil fuels. Therefore, in order to achieve carbon neutrality in Ireland by 2050 and the interim targets in advance of this date, energy efficiency and conservation of the non-renewable resources available to us for as long as possible must be dramatically increased. See Chapter 2 Climate Action for further information and detailed objectives relating to climate action.

Development Plan Objective: Energy Efficiency and Conservation	
CDP 11.52	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support and promote energy efficiency savings in all sectors in support of the National Energy Efficiency Action

	Plan and the objectives of the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy in Volume 5 of this plan.
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11.8.8 Broadband Connectivity

There has been a significant increase in the level and quality of broadband connectivity across the county, which is indicative of the high levels of investment in this area in recent years. However, much of this improvement has been focused on urban areas and many rural areas continue to experience poor quality of service.

The aim of the National Broadband Plan (NBP) is to deliver high speed broadband services to all premises in Ireland with specific reference to ‘intervention areas’ which are areas where commercial operators acting alone are unlikely to invest. National Broadband Ireland (NBI) is designing, building, and operating the new high-speed fibre broadband network with a minimum download speed of 500Mbps for rural Ireland. All counties will see premises included in the first 2 years of rollout and over 90% of premises in the State will have access to high-speed broadband within the next four years. Upon completion the NBP will have connected 23% of the population, 544,000 premises, 1.1 million people, 54,000 farms, 44,000 small businesses and 695 schools. High speed reliable broadband connectivity is essential for the economic growth of both County Clare and the wider region in terms of attracting inward investment and increasing competitiveness. It is also essential to ensure a high quality of life for residents of County Clare, particularly those in the ‘intervention areas’.

DigiClare is an initiative of Clare County Council identified as part of the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2023 and established to support rural communities by providing flexible, affordable and local office facilities and high-speed broadband connectivity in rural locations in the county. This is further addressed in Section 8.2.8 Rural Broadband.

Development Plan Objective: Digital Strategy	
CDP 11.53	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support and facilitate the implementation of the Clare Digital Strategy 2023 and support the role and initiatives of the Mobile and Broadband Taskforce in addressing digital and mobile coverage blackspots and rural communications connectivity.

Development Plan Objective: Broadband Connectivity	
CDP 11.54	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support and facilitate the delivery of the National Broadband Plan and high-capacity ICT infrastructure to all locations across the county;

	<p>b) To support and facilitate the implementation of the Clare Digital Strategy 2023 and its successor(s); and,</p> <p>c) To support and facilitate the sustainable delivery of digital infrastructure ducting and dark fibre infrastructure and the strengthening of Metropolitan Area Networks and to ensure compliance with the environmental requirements of objectives CDP 3.3.</p>
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11.8.9 Telecommunications Infrastructure

Fast, reliable and cost effective telecommunications can encourage economic development in an area and can enrich the quality of life at home by offering new choices in education, entertainment and communications. Clare County Council will respond positively to developments of telecommunications infrastructure whilst taking into account other planning policies.

The Council will have regard to planning guidelines in the then DEHLG Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities, in assessing proposals for telecommunications infrastructure and support structures. The Planning Authority will work with the telecommunications providers to facilitate the development of infrastructure that respects the recognised value of the natural and built heritage and will seek to encourage the co-location of masts and antennae on existing structures within the county.

Development Plan Objective: Telecommunications Infrastructure	
CDP 11.55	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To consider the provision of high-speed, high-capacity digital and mobile infrastructure within the County having regard to the DEHLG Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures Guidelines for Planning Authorities 1996 (as updated by PL07/12 of 2012) with regard to the appropriate environmental assessments and compliance with objective CDP 3.3 of this plan.</p>



Chapter 12 Shannon Estuary

Goal XII: A county that builds on the strategic location and natural resources of the Shannon Estuary by facilitating and maximising its potential for various forms of development while managing the estuarine and natural environment in full compliance with all relevant EU Directives.

Chapter 12 Table of Contents:

12.0	Introduction
12.1	Strategic Aims
12.2	Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary
12.2.1	Integrated Development of the Shannon Estuary
12.2.2	Strategic Development Locations
12.2.2.1	Inishmurry / Cahiracon
12.2.2.2	Moneypoint
12.3	Shipping and Navigation
12.4	Harnessing the Energy Resource of the Shannon Estuary
12.4.1	Renewable Energy
12.5	Tourism on the Shannon Estuary
12.6	Estuary Settlements
12.7	The Estuary Islands
12.8	Aviation
12.9	Commercial Fishing / Aquaculture on the Estuary
12.10	Maritime Research, Education and Training
12.11	Environment
12.12	Water-Borne Transport
12.13	Marina Developments

12.0 Introduction

The Shannon Estuary extends 100km from Limerick City to Loop Head and is Ireland's largest Estuary. The Estuary with 500km² of navigable water comprises the tidal reaches of the lower River Shannon between Limerick City and the Atlantic and incorporates the Fergus Estuary south of Clarecastle. As a deepwater port, the Shannon Estuary routinely caters for ships of up to 200,000 deadweight tonnes. It serves a number of large industrial bulk installations and Shannon International Airport has a dedicated fuel terminal. The port of Foynes is located in the southern part of the Estuary, with Limerick City located further to the east. The *RSES* recognises the national and international importance of Shannon Estuary, its potential to attract multinational development and the significant work that has been undertaken to progress its promotion and development.

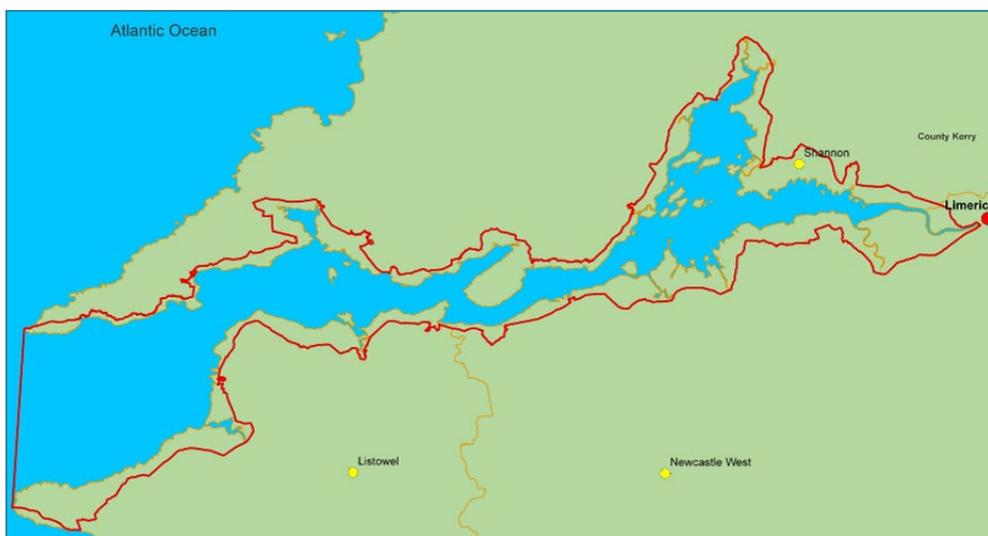


Figure 12.1 Shannon Estuary Area

The Estuary area is a multi-functional zone, with the waters and adjoining lands supporting a range of functions, uses and activities as well as environmental resources and assets which bring character, prosperity and vibrancy to the area. These include shipping and port functions, renewable energy opportunities, aquaculture, fishing, marine tourism, recreation and leisure activities, energy generation, industry and business, fuel storage, aviation, agriculture, valuable habitats and species, seascapes, landscapes and architectural heritage. There is significant potential for growth in many of the above sectors and delivering on this potential will require co-operation between authorities and sectors sharing an interest in the Estuary. The *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary*, as contained in Volume 9 of this plan, encourages, facilitates and promotes a balanced approach to the Estuary's growth, whilst simultaneously encouraging careful protection, management and enhancement of its natural environmental resources.

The Shannon Estuary Task Force was established in 2022 on foot of a commitment in the Programme for Government to support the Shannon Estuary and surrounding area. The Task

Force is engaged in the evaluation of the potential of the area and tasked with determining how that potential can be realised.

The Terms of Reference for the Shannon Estuary Economic Taskforce are to:

- Assess the strategic strengths and comparative advantages of the Shannon Estuary from an investment and enterprise development perspective, in a national and international context;
- Scope potential areas of opportunity for the Shannon Estuary and specify policy and investment requirements to exploit those areas of potential;
- Assess the current connectivity of the region and make recommendations as to how this could be enhanced;
- Specify the actions required from national and local government, as well as from other stakeholders, to exploit those areas of potential; and
- Produce a Report and associated Action Plan with specific steps in areas of potential.

Clare County Council will support the work of the Task Force in all of its activities.

The Estuary is macro-tidal, having the largest tidal range on the Irish coast (5.44 metres at Limerick Docks). Water depths vary from approximately 37 metres at the Estuary mouth and along parts of the County Clare shoreline to less than 5 metres near Limerick City. The Estuary's deep water, generous hinterland, skilled resident population and location at the entrance to Limerick City make it an attractive base for various industries.

The River Shannon and River Fergus estuaries, which adjoin 3 counties (i.e. Clare, Kerry and Limerick), form the largest estuarine complex in Ireland. The entire Estuary is designated as part of a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC), namely the Lower River Shannon cSAC, which is a wildlife conservation area considered to be of national and European importance. The vast intertidal mudflats exposed at low tide together with a diversity of other wetland habitats results in the estuarine complex being especially important for birds. As a consequence, some 32,000 hectares are designated as the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA under the EU *Birds Directive*. As such, the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries form part of a network of sites across Europe protected under the *Habitats Directive* and *Birds Directive*. These designations place the area under strict requirements for the assessment of all plans and projects to determine their potential for adverse effects on the integrity of such sites.

12.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives required to maximise the potential of the Shannon Estuary while protecting its designated ecological resources. In accordance with the overall vision of the plan, it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To implement the SIFP to provide clarity of purpose and direction for the future development of, and investment in, the Shannon Estuary and its environs;
- To diversify the economy through the promotion, along the Shannon Estuary, of industry/business and employment opportunities, aquaculture and fisheries, offshore renewables, maritime activities, water-related recreation, tourism industries and maritime training, in a sustainable manner;
- To support and expand the existing economic base, including port and harbour facilities and related activities and to regenerate areas previously used for maritime activities;
- To appropriately protect, manage and enhance the natural coastal environment, cultural and built heritage of the estuary area;
- To ensure that all proposed development is in accordance with the *SEA Directive, Birds and Habitats Directives, Water Framework Directive, Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Shellfish Waters Directive, Floods Directive* and *EIA Directive*; and
- To work with the Shannon Estuary Task Force towards delivering on opportunities presented by the Shannon Estuary.

12.2 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary contains a number of long-established large commercial ports as well as nationally significant industries and economic centres and is one of Ireland's most important maritime resources. However, since the enactment



of the *European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations S.I. 94/1997*¹, it has become increasingly apparent that the future development and extension of such activities will need to be closely co-ordinated with the conservation objectives for the European sites concerned.

The Shannon Estuary is designated as both a candidate Special Area of Conservation (cSAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA). Therefore, no development can be planned for, or permitted, unless the prior assessment regime laid out in Article 6 of the Habitats Directive has been complied with. In addition, public authorities are obliged to avoid pollution and

¹ Now superseded by European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2015 (S.I. 355/2015)

deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species, as well as disturbance of the species, for which areas have been designated in so far as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the *Habitats and Birds Directives*. Furthermore, the Cloon River, which flows into the Shannon Estuary at Clonderlaw Bay, forms part of the Lower River Shannon cSAC and is designated for the freshwater pearl mussel which is the subject of further specific protective measures. The designation of habitats is not meant to prohibit development; it is meant to ensure that policies, plans and projects are conceived having due regard to maintaining the integrity and dynamics of a habitat, its constituent species and the necessary environmental resources so as to sustain them at favourable conservation status.

The existence of such designations requires a systematic approach to the development of plans, policies and objectives. This is necessary to demonstrate that environmental considerations have been taken into account from the beginning. An evidence-led approach is required whereby decisions take account of all relevant environmental considerations, including resources such as air and water quality, disturbance, pollution and connectivity. To facilitate the implementation of Development Plan Objective CDP12.2 the inter-jurisdictional *Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary* has been prepared and comprises Volume 9 of this plan.

The *SIFP* sets out an overall 30-year strategy for the proper sustainable growth, development and environmental management of the Shannon Estuary region. Within its lifetime the *SIFP* must be able to respond to changing circumstances within policy and governance at EU, national, regional and local levels, as well as contextual changes within the Estuary region, including population, lifestyles and aspirations for the future.

The Strategy aims to:

- Support the multi-functional nature of the Shannon Estuary and identify opportunities to expand the existing economic base, including port-related industry and other associated activities;
- Facilitate the diversification of the economy through the promotion of appropriate commercial/industrial employment, environmentally friendly aquaculture and fisheries, renewable energy, transport, recreation and tourism industries in a sustainable manner;
- Promote, manage and enhance the natural coastal environment along the Estuary, including its cultural, natural and built heritage; and
- Safeguard the Estuary's sensitive environmental resources and natural heritage of National, European and international significance.

The *RSES* supports the delivery of the Strategic Development Locations as set out in the *SIFP for the Shannon Estuary* and promotes the *SIFP* initiative as a good practice model for the

Southern Region. It is also an objective of the *RSES* to support the promotion, marketing and seeking of financial and expertise support for the *SIFP for the Shannon Estuary* and for specific projects emerging there from.

Development Plan Objective: Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary	
CDP12.1	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support and implement the inter-jurisdictional <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i> in conjunction with the other relevant local authorities and agencies. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>SEA Directive, Birds and Habitats Directives, Water Framework Directive and Shellfish Waters Directive, Floods Directive and EIA Directive</i>. All proposed developments shall incorporate the Mitigation Measures as contained in the <i>SIFP</i> (Volume 9 of this plan) for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.</p> <p>b) To proactively market the Strategic Development Locations in County Clare at Inishmurry/Cahiracon and Moneypoint as potential locations for future economic development.</p>

12.2.1 Integrated Development of the Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary lies within the functional areas of a number of local authorities and other statutory agencies and its successful development requires a co-operative approach between these bodies. It is an objective of the Council to work with other bodies to facilitate development in respect of the entire Estuary and, in particular along the northern shoreline which lies within County Clare. The Council will undertake the role of enabling the implementation and delivery of the *SIFP for the Shannon Estuary* within the administrative area of the county in a co-ordinated and integrated manner and in co-operation with the relevant statutory authorities and agencies. The *SIFP* comprises Volume 9 of this plan.

Development Plan Objective: Integrated Development of the Shannon Estuary	
CDP12.2	<p>It is an objective of the Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate, encourage and promote development and economic growth and employment in environmentally sustainable areas along the Shannon Estuary, by implementing the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i>;</p> <p>b) To support the promotion, marketing and seeking of financial and expertise support for the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i> and specific projects emerging there from; and</p>

	c) To promote a co-ordinated approach to the collation of baseline data for the Shannon Estuary as one ecosystem or entity.
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12.2.2 Strategic Development Locations

The Shannon Estuary has the deepest watercourse in Ireland and is one of the deepest estuaries in the world. It is one of Ireland’s premier maritime resources with a number of long-established and successful marine enterprises including major ports and nationally significant industries and economic centres. The Estuary benefits from key attributes that influenced the development of large scale industry and the marine industrial base that currently operates there. These existing industries have the potential to attract further significant investment to the area.

There are two definable clusters of industry on the Shannon Estuary, one concentrated broadly around Moneypoint, Tarbert and Ballylongford, and another focussed around Foynes, Aughinish and Cahiracon.

Development Plan Objective: Marine-Related Industry/Large-Scale Industry on the Estuary	
CDP12.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To capitalise on the natural deep water potential and existing port and maritime infrastructure, by facilitating and proactively encouraging the environmentally sustainable development of maritime industries at appropriate locations within the Shannon Estuary, while seeking to improve and promote the road and transport connectivity of the deepwater ports in the county. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds</i> and <i>Habitats Directives</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.</p> <p>All development associated with marine related industry shall incorporate the sector and site-specific Mitigation Measures as contained in the <i>SIFP</i> (Volume 9 of this plan) for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.</p>

Strategic Development Locations are areas identified in the *SIFP* that are likely to generate the greatest potential opportunities in terms of social and economic aspirations, while safeguarding the essential integrity of the natural environment. Two Strategic Development Locations (SDLs) have been identified on the Shannon Estuary in County Clare and these are:

- Strategic Development Location A: Inishmurry/Cahiracon (Map 12A);
- Strategic Development Location B: Moneypoint (Map 12B).

Lands at both of these locations have been zoned for Marine-Related Industry and have the potential to facilitate a concentration of marine-related industrial development, including offshore wind energy component manufacturing and subsequent onshore energy conversion, storage and onward transmission. The SDLs are critical to the future development potential of marine-related development in the Estuary. Clare County Council recognises the importance of safeguarding the current roles and functions of the SDLs, as well as allowing flexibility to encourage diversification into other compatible marine-related industrial activities that are attracted by the existing facilities and other potential synergies at these locations.

Development Plan Objective: Strategic Development Locations	
CDP12.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To safeguard the roles and functions of the Strategic Development Locations, which are identified on Map 12A and Map 12B at the end of this chapter and in the <i>SIFP</i> (Volume 9 of this plan); and b) To support economic development by encouraging the sustainable growth, development and appropriate diversification of Strategic Development Locations; <p>All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.</p>

12.2.2.1 Inishmurry / Cahiracon

With its location on the Shannon Estuary Way which is a route off the world-famous Wild Atlantic Way – the longest defined and among the most stunning coastal routes in the world – with natural deep and sheltered waters, County Clare and the Shannon Estuary are welcoming and attractive destinations for cruise liners and their passengers. The Shannon Estuary is bounded by three of Ireland’s most scenic and historic counties, Clare, Kerry and Limerick, each of which has significant tourism offerings.

The Inishmurry/Cahiracon SDL is located to the south west of the settlement of Killadysert and is on the north shore of the Shannon Estuary. There is an existing pier and a large pocket of deep water located on the edge of the SDL which provides significant potential for maritime industry. The site which has an overall area of 65.94 hectares is predominantly used for agriculture and forestry. The SDL is identified within the *Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan* which indicates its potential for growth of commercial/regional facilities for foreign direct investment and indigenous industry, enterprise and culture.

The SDL is located adjacent to the Lower River Shannon cSAC and the River Shannon and River Fergus Estuaries SPA. Cahiracon House, which is on the Record of Protected Structures (Volume 4 of this plan), is located approximately one kilometre to the southwest of the SDL. There are also a number of protected archaeological monuments located within the SDL area.

A portion of the lands within the SDL are subject to risk from coastal and pluvial flooding.

Clare County Council considers that the SDL has potential for development of marine-related industry due to:

- Its well sheltered location with an existing pier offering direct access to a large pocket of deep water and the main navigation channel;
- A considerable area of hinterland being available in close proximity to the R473 regional road;
- The identification of the land in the *Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region* as having realistic potential for marine-related industry;
- Its strategic location on the opposite side of the Estuary to the SDL at the Port of Foynes;
- A major industrial development having been previously permitted on the site;
- It provides an opportunity to redevelop and re-use the existing marine infrastructure at the existing pier; and
- The presence of flood embankments.

Tidal Energy at Cahiracon Pier

Significant potential exists for the exploitation of the tidal energy resource in the Shannon Estuary and in particular off the Clare coastline. There is an opportunity to utilise the considerable capacity and commitment within the region for research and development in this field and to sensitively explore this renewable energy potential. Technical analysis of the Estuary and its port infrastructure in the *Irish Ports Offshore Renewable Energy Services (IPORES) Report 2012* concluded that the Shannon Estuary has the potential to become a European Ocean Energy Hub. In County Clare, the *SIFP* identifies an area adjacent to Moneypoint as having significant potential for development of the tidal energy resource in the Shannon Estuary. This site is also identified as an area of significant potential in the *SEAI Report Tidal & Current Energy Resources in Ireland*. The Clare Renewable Energy Strategy identifies a potential generation capacity of 20MW of energy from tidal sources.

Cahiracon pier provides an ideal location from which to deploy tidal devices with the tidal regime at this location providing the optimal conditions for testing. Approval for the testing of such devices at this location in Cahiracon will ultimately lead to a number of jobs locally through the provision of training on the deployment, utilisation and maintenance of such devices to a global market. Following environmental and site appraisal, Clare County Council supports the development of an offshore maritime renewable test location off Cahercon Pier.

Development Plan Objective: Strategic Development Location A – Inishmurry/Cahiracon	
CDP12.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate and promote the sustainable development of the lands at Strategic Development Location A – Inishmurry/Cahiracon for marine related industry. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.</p> <p>All proposed development at Strategic Development Location A shall incorporate the Mitigation Measures as contained in the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i> (Volume 9 of this plan) for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.</p>

12.2.2.2 Moneypoint

The SDL at Moneypoint is located on the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary, is 3 kilometres south east of Kilrush and is recognised as a strategic national asset in the *RSES*. As the producer of 25% of the national energy output, Moneypoint is Ireland’s largest electricity generation station. The overall SDL lands comprise of approximately 280 hectares of which 227 hectares are occupied by the power generating station with a further 53 hectares of land available to develop. The generating station, which is owned and operated by the ESB, has an installed capacity of 915MW. The site is a major hub for electricity transmission with a 440kv transmission station, connecting into the National Grid system. It is also a bulk supply point for the region, and an essential component of the ESB meshed transmission system.



Moneypoint is an existing, strategically important energy hub in terms of capacity and security of supply through providing diversity in fuel use and providing critical energy storage for the global energy market. It has a network of 400, 220 and 110kV power lines radiating from the station and these lines are core elements of the national and regional grid network. In accordance with the European Green Deal, the *National Climate Action Plan*, the Programme for Government 2020 *Our Shared Vision* and the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act (2021)* Ireland is required to transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy no later than 2050. The *RSES* also promotes the conversion of Moneypoint electricity station by 2025 from the generation of energy by burning fossil fuels to the generation of energy by renewable means.

Five wind turbines were recently permitted and installed on the site and these have an overall generating capacity of 15MW. The ESB has also announced plans under its *Brighter Future* strategy to transform the site from a fossil fuel burning power generation station into a green energy hub under the 'Green Atlantic' project. The project is a multi-billion Euro programme of significant investments on the site over the next decade. The overall project comprises of:

- Renewable enablement – Installation of a 'Sustainable Support System' (i.e. synchronous compensator) which will provide a range of services to the electricity grid including the enabling of higher volumes of energy from renewable sources;
- Offshore floating windfarm – A floating offshore Windfarm of 1,400 megawatts to be developed in 2 phases off the coasts of County Clare and County Kerry with a capability of powering more than 1.6 million homes in Ireland;
- Wind turbine construction hub – To develop Moneypoint as a centre for the construction and assembly of floating wind turbines and to support the wider plans of Shannon Foynes Port to make the Shannon Estuary a focal point for the offshore wind industry in Europe;
- Hydrogen energy – Investment in a green hydrogen production, storage and generation facility at Moneypoint. There is significant hydrogen storage and manufacturing potential at Moneypoint. The green hydrogen will be produced from renewable energy and used for power generation, heavy goods vehicles in the transport sector and to help decarbonise a wide range of industries such as pharmaceuticals, electronics and cement manufacturing.

Clare County Council supports the 'Green Atlantic' project and is committed to safeguarding the future operations and proposed development at Moneypoint to ensure efficient production of environmentally sustainable electricity and security/diversity of supply in the future while at the same time ensuring that the environmental integrity of the adjacent Shannon Estuary is maintained. In addition, there are a number of pockets of deep water in this area and a tidal energy resource opportunity has been identified which is available for full exploration. The Council will work with the relevant stakeholders and the local communities to understand how people may be affected by the transition to a low carbon

future at the Moneypoint SDL and how best to ensure a just energy and climate neutral transition for all.

The SDL is close to the mouth of the Estuary with excellent transport linkages including direct access to sea traffic for the likes of the proposed floating wind turbine materials/components and the existing fuel deliveries (that ensures efficient replenishment of stand-by fuel general reserves). The lands are also well connected to the existing road network.

Having regard to the location of this SDL on the N67 National Secondary road, any development which requires a new direct access onto that route shall have regard to, and be in compliance with, *Spatial Planning and National Roads – Guidelines for Planning Authorities* (DoECLG 2012), and in particular Section 2.6 of these Guidelines, which requires the identification of ‘exceptional circumstances’ where a less restrictive approach to the control of access to national roads may apply. This is in addition to any other relevant objectives that may apply and are contained within this plan.

The SDL is adjacent to Natura 2000 site designations and there are protected archaeological monuments located within the SDL area. In addition, the site is a SEVESO Upper Tier Site. Any proposed development at this SDL must be cognisant of the statutory requirements associated with these designations.

The sustainable delivery of such major development projects as the Green Atlantic project at Moneypoint in the Shannon Estuary requires consideration and sensitive balancing of many complex considerations, including technical aspects of the project, potential environmental impacts and socio-economic considerations, all in the context of the requirement to adhere to a complex network of European, National and local legislation, policy and regulation. The implementation of EU Directives obligates investors to achieve this balance between development and the protection of the environment within the Estuary.

Development Plan Objective: Strategic Development Location B– Moneypoint	
CDP12.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To safeguard the role and function of Strategic Development Location B – Moneypoint as a key strategic driver of economic growth in the country, facilitating its sustainable growth, operational expansion and diversification, in accordance with national and regional energy objectives. b) To support the redevelopment of the Moneypoint power generation station site as a green energy hub and the development of the Shannon Estuary as a focal point for the offshore wind industry in Europe. c) To support and facilitate the development of marine related industry on lands adjacent to Moneypoint which is

	<p>compatible with the primary use of the SDL as a Strategic Energy Location.</p> <p>d) To ensure that all proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.</p> <p>e) To ensure that all proposed development at Strategic Development Location B shall incorporate the Mitigation Measures as contained in the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i> (Volume 9 of this plan) for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.</p>
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12.3 Shipping and Navigation

The ability to accommodate larger ships is critical to safeguarding and developing Ireland’s trade potential and its competitiveness in the global market. This is particularly important in the context of the challenges posed by Brexit and the capacity issues on existing direct ferry routes between Ireland and mainland Europe. Clare County Council will seek to provide the policy framework that safeguards the critical deepwater channels, and facilitates the sustainable growth of deep draught berths, quayside infrastructure and cargo handling facilities to ensure that shipping on the Shannon Estuary continues to make a significant contribution to the national and regional economy.

Development Plan Objective: Shipping and Navigation	
CDP12.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate and promote the economic growth of shipping trade and investment within the Shannon Estuary, in a sustainable, safe and environmentally sensitive manner. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives;</p> <p>b) To support cooperation across all relevant sectors in the preparation of Strategic Dredging Management Plans.</p> <p>c) To use the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i> to promote the establishment of a long term, whole-estuary approach to the collation of noise monitoring data to inform the potential environmental effects of such an expansion in shipping within the Estuary on long lived species such as bottlenose dolphins;</p> <p>d) To ensure that all proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives; and</p> <p>e) To ensure that all development associated with shipping and navigation shall incorporate the sector and site-specific</p>

	Mitigation Measures as contained in the <i>SIFP</i> (Volume 9 of this plan) for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.
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12.4 Harnessing the Energy Resource of the Shannon Estuary

Clare County Council recognises that the Shannon Estuary is long established as a major contributor to the national energy supply market. Energy development within the Shannon Estuary must be considered in the context of the multi-functional nature of the Estuary area and the competing requirement to safeguard the nature conservation obligations of international standing. The context is also provided by national energy policy in respect of security of supply, the national requirement to transition to a climate neutral economy no later than 2050, the existing energy infrastructure in the region, the need to upgrade infrastructure for the delivery and expansion of the electricity and gas networks, and the technical capacity of the Estuary to accommodate growth in the energy sector.

Development Plan Objective: Harnessing the Energy Resources of the Shannon Estuary	
CDP12.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that the Shannon Estuary fulfils its optimum role in contributing to the diversity and security of energy supply; b) To harness the potential of the Estuary for the sustainable development of renewable energy sources to assist in meeting renewable energy targets. c) To contribute to a working group on Research, Education and Training to map research capabilities, human capacity, national and international connections and opportunities with respect to renewable energy. (d) To ensure that all proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives. (e) To ensure that all development associated with the energy sector shall incorporate the sector and site specific Mitigation Measures as contained in the <i>SIFP</i> (Volume 9 of this plan) for ensuring the integrity of the Natura 2000 Network.

12.4.1 Renewable Energy

Given the requirements on Local Authorities as outlined within the national *Climate Action Plan 2023*, the Shannon Estuary is set to become a world class leader and major contributor to renewable energy generation and transmission, taking advantage of the potential offshore floating wind power in the deeper waters off the Atlantic coast. Clare County Council recognises that the growth of the offshore renewable energy sector and the ESB's 'Green

Atlantic' project present significant opportunities for the Shannon Estuary and beyond in respect of new infrastructure and supply chain enterprises. The Shannon Estuary is well placed to capture a significant share of this market and to become a focal point for the offshore wind industry in Europe. It is acknowledged that to take advantage of these opportunities, strategic investment is required at the Estuary's ports and the appropriate upgrade of these facilities is supported by the Council.

Renewable energy development in the Shannon Estuary must demonstrate compatibility with the critical environmental considerations and the strategic shipping/navigation interests that exist on the Estuary.

12.5 Tourism on the Shannon Estuary

The Shannon Estuary is the place where Ireland's longest river enters the Atlantic Ocean and is an area of remarkable beauty. There is a wide range of major tourist attractions in and around the Shannon Estuary from Bunratty Castle in the east, Loop Head in the west, marina facilities and associated attractions at Kilrush, the Blue Flag beaches at Cappa and Kilkee, the network of cycling, trekking and walking trails, a myriad of water-based tourist facilities and scenic routes. In addition, Shannon International Airport, which functions as a key gateway to the region and the West of Ireland, is located on the northern shores of the Estuary. Clare County Council recognises that the Estuary, with its considerable range of attractions in terms of the scale and variety of the offer is a marketable tourism asset.

The *Developing Nature-Based Tourism Opportunities on the Shannon Estuary Way* strategy was launched in 2019 following a community led project supported by Clare County Council, Limerick City and County Council, Clare Local Development Company, West Limerick Resources and Fáilte Ireland with the aim of making the Shannon Estuary a key tourist attraction for the Mid-West. The strategy aims to increase visitor dwell times and spending in the local communities along the 207km Shannon Estuary route and to achieve synergies with the Wild Atlantic Way.

The environment of the Shannon Estuary is internationally recognised for its nature conservation interest which is a tourist asset in its own right. In addition, studies carried out to date have examined the feasibility of sustainable exploitation of the eco/heritage tourism potential of the islands of the Estuary. The Estuary's coastal habitat is an important ecological environment sheltered from the Atlantic and it carries legal protection that reflects its environmental value. The quality of the natural environment and architectural heritage makes the area attractive as a leisure destination for eco/heritage tourism, bird/dolphin watching and activity breaks.

Clare County Council will seek to build on these considerable assets and will generally direct tourist development projects to the settlements around the Shannon Estuary, pitching development at a level commensurate with the status of the settlement in the Settlement Hierarchy. The Council will encourage and facilitate expansion and re-development of existing

facilities, while minimising the potential for harm to this prized environment by ensuring compliance with the Habitats Directive.

Cruise Industry

With its location on the world-famous Wild Atlantic Way and with natural deep and sheltered waters, County Clare and the Shannon Estuary is a welcoming and attractive destination for cruise liners and their passengers.

Clare County Council has collaborated with Shannon Foynes Port Company and adjoining Local Authorities to form 'Cruise Shannon Estuary', an initiative to sustainably grow the cruise and sustainable marine tourism industry and to establish the Shannon Estuary and County Clare as one of the top destinations for cruise liners in Europe.

In the context of County Clare, the proposal will seek to dock small to medium size expedition cruise ships mid-way in the Estuary and tender passengers' northwards to Cahiracon Pier and County Clare, offering a unique experience for its passengers to visit the amenities and attractions in the nearby coastal towns and villages along the Estuary and experience the stunning trails, local produce and the attractions of the county. The cruise potential was identified through engagement with Shannon Foynes Port Company (SFPC) and the cruise sector, consideration of the physical and logistical attributes of Cahiracon Pier itself and the positive policy framework set out in the *Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023* and the *SIFP for the Shannon Estuary*. This is further complemented by the *Clare Tourism Strategy 2030* and its Strategic Priority to 'Explore the feasibility of attracting an appropriate segment of the cruise sector in a sustainable manner'. This plan supports Cahiracon Pier accepting cruise sector tourists and for the carrying out of the necessary works to facilitate this.

The *SIFP* recognises that the Shannon Estuary is a marketable tourist asset with a considerable range of attractions in terms of the scale and variety of offer. It recognises that the Estuary presents some challenges to the cruise industry including the degree of deviation from established routes.

Renewable Energy Training

There are significant opportunities post Brexit and Covid-19 in terms of the provision of maritime training. The proximity of the Clare Maritime Economic Zone (MEZ) facility in Kilrush to Moneypoint, Shannon-Foynes Port and the Shannon Estuary offers a unique opportunity for the training centre to be at the heart of the provision of maritime training in the context of the offshore renewable energy developments targeted for off the west coast in the coming years.

In line with ESB's Green Atlantic offshore floating wind energy project and the transformation of Moneypoint into a Green Energy Hub it will be necessary to retrain the existing workforce and to increase knowledge in the wider workforce as the offshore renewable energy sector grows.

Development Plan Objective: Promoting Tourism, Recreation and Leisure around the Shannon Estuary	
CDP12.9	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate and promote the sensitive and sustainable use of the Shannon Estuary's assets in an integrated manner to develop a dynamic and sustainable tourism, recreation and leisure sector that delivers maximum social and economic benefit to the communities of the estuary while safeguarding valued landscape, heritage and environmental interests. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i> , <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.

Development Plan Objective: Cruise Ship Industry	
CDP12.10	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support and facilitate the sustainable use of the Estuary by the cruise ship industry by maintaining and safeguarding critical navigational channels, anchorage and berthing facilities. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i> , <i>Water Framework Directive</i> , <i>Invasive Alien Species Regulations</i> and <i>Shellfish Waters Directive</i> , <i>Floods Directive</i> and <i>EIA Directive</i> .

12.6 Estuary Settlements

There are a number of important settlements adjacent to the Shannon Estuary including Shannon and Kilrush which are the second and third largest towns in County Clare. The settlements along the northern shoreline of the Estuary include Ballynacally, Carrigaholt, Doonaha, Kilbaha, Killadysert, Killimer, Knock, Labasheeda and Querrin. Objectives for the Settlement Hierarchy are contained in Chapter 4 of the plan. In accordance with *RSES* Regional Policy Objective RPO29, the Council supports the development of rural settlement networks in the county (i.e. such as those along the Estuary) to assist in collaborative projects (e.g. the Shannon Estuary Way) and sharing of assets and strengths.

Development Plan Objective: Estuary Settlements	
CDP12.11	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To ensure that the settlements along the northern shoreline of the Estuary benefit from potential economic, tourism and recreational developments, in accordance with

	<p>the role of the settlement on the Settlement Hierarchy in Chapter 3, Section 3.4 'Settlement Hierarchy'.</p> <p>b) To support the concept of settlement networks, to assist collaborative projects and the sharing of assets and strengths, the strengthening of the viability of the existing settlements along the Estuary and the maintenance and expansion of existing population levels and essential services and roles.</p>
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12.7 The Estuary Islands

Clare County Council recognises that the islands of the Estuary offer potential for the sustainable development of eco-tourism and heritage-based tourism. The islands are still farmed despite the challenging nature of the landscape.

The Shannon Estuary is one of the most important sites in Ireland for wintering and migrating water birds, thus reflecting the designation of the majority of the Estuary as a Special Protection Area. The Estuary around the islands has considerable potential for bird watching and other nature conservation-based pursuits. In combination with the rich cultural heritage and a remarkable landscape setting, this represents a significant tourism opportunity. However, nature conservation is a very high priority, and any development must ensure that the conservation objectives for the European sites are maintained at favourable status.

Each island has its own story to tell in the social history of the Shannon Estuary, with each hosting a wealth of cultural heritage. An example of the development of eco-tourism and heritage-based tourism associated with the islands is the establishment of a boat tour service from Kilrush to Scatterry Island. Uninhabited since 1978, the island has seen significant increases in the number of tourists visiting in recent years.

12.8 Aviation

Shannon International Airport and Shannon Town are located on the Estuary. Currently the regular delivery of aviation fuel to the Airport by bulk oil-tankers at Shannon Port is the only direct transport connection between the Estuary waters and Shannon Town. Given the scale, potential and multi-modal international and national transport linkages from Shannon, potential may exist to improve connectivity and linkages between marine-based transport and Shannon, creating a multi-modal logistics hub in the region. The Council recognises the importance of Shannon International Airport and the industrial base in Shannon Town to the region as a whole. A further investigation of the potential for additional linkages and access to the water from Shannon Town and complementary uses of the existing jetty facilities will be encouraged and supported.



It is critical to safeguard the airport lands for future airport expansion and rationalisation, and as a result Clare County Council will give priority to aviation and other compatible uses including aircraft servicing and maintenance, freight cargo handling, complementary business park uses, flight schools, autonomous vehicle testing and international logistics and research that support the long term sustainability of the airport and business park.

It is noted that any such developments may require works in/adjacent to areas designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Special Protection Area (SPA) and, in this regard, projects must comply with the requirement of the *Habitats and Birds Directives*.

Development Plan Objective: Aviation and the Shannon Estuary	
CDP12.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To realise the long term potential of Shannon International Airport and its environs within the Southern Region, and encourage the sustainable development of the Airport as a strategic economic driver in the Shannon Estuary and the wider Region. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i> , <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.

12.9 Commercial Fishing/Aquaculture on the Estuary

The Atlantic waters off Ireland’s south-west coast are renowned for being rich fishing grounds and the Shannon Estuary offers excellent fishing all year round. The relatively sheltered waters of the Estuary contain a series of harbours and piers of various scales and specifications. Clare County Council in collaboration with other agencies will facilitate, where appropriate, the development of commercial fishing and associated improvements to piers and infrastructure facilities in the Shannon Estuary, while having regard to the requirement to manage and conserve the natural resources, and in particular to comply with the

requirements of the Habitats Directive. The principal commercial fishing activity in the Estuary is for shellfish. In addition, some limited salmon fishing, potting and seasonal trawling also take place. All fish/shellfish production by aquaculture is subject to licence from the Minister of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The *Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC)* protects existing shellfish waters in Carrigaholt, Rinevella Bay and Poulnasharry Bay. In undertaking its functions, Clare County Council will have regard to the requirement to protect the shellfish waters.

Development Plan Objective: Commercial Fishing/Aquaculture	
CDP12.13	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To contribute to the diversification of the local economy, growth in employment and social well-being of coastal communities of County Clare through the facilitation and promotion of environmentally-sustainable commercial fishing and aquaculture, within the Areas of Opportunity for commercial fishing/aquaculture identified in the <i>Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary</i> , which are at Poulnasharry Bay, Carrigaholt Bay, Rinevella Bay, Killimer and Clonderalaw Bay. All proposed developments shall be in accordance with the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives.

12.10 Maritime Research, Education and Training

Kilrush Maritime Training Centre

The Kilrush Maritime Training Centre established by Clare Maritime Economic Zone (MEZ) DAC will provide the infrastructure and specialist equipment to support a range of complementary maritime services along the Estuary. Clare MEZ will have responsibility for managing, developing, and promoting the maritime facilities and for ensuring the sustainability and success of this initiative. It will seek to take advantage of the emerging markets in renewable energy in particular, at this strategic location on the West Clare coastline.

Clare County Council carried out a *Feasibility Study on the Potential Development of a Maritime Centre of Excellence in County Clare* in 2017 and this was funded through the Enterprise Ireland Regional Development Fund. The feasibility study had regard to:

- The commercial focus of other maritime clusters in Ireland including those located on the Atlantic coast in Cork, Limerick and Galway;

- The unique properties and location of the Shannon Estuary coastline in Co. Clare centered on Cahiracon, Moneypoint and Kilrush zones identified in the *SIFP*, and the unique infrastructure within the zone;
- The zone’s location on the northern shore of the Shannon and the challenging socio-economic conditions in the immediate area and the surrounding region.

The Council secured a further €1.78 million through Enterprise Ireland’s Regional Enterprise Development Fund and a further €3.5 million through the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) to establish a Maritime Training Centre in Kilrush. The project will include the establishment of a specialist commercial training facility providing mandatory maritime training courses and value-added training for non-seafaring personnel taking up positions at sea.

Development Plan Objective: Maritime Training Centre	
CDP12.14	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support and facilitate the establishment of a specialist Maritime Training Centre in Kilrush.

Third Level and NGO Research Facility

The Shannon Estuary is a unique environment of high global nature conservation value. The delivery of accommodation, field labs, classrooms and other marine facilities with direct access to the Shannon Estuary will enable 3rd level institutes together with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) such as the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group (IWDG) access to facilities which are otherwise not available in Ireland. The Maritime Training Centre in Kilrush will provide an opportunity for the IWDG to expand their research and education sectors and will also enable them to provide a unique service to their supporters. Many of our Universities and Institutes of Technology offer a broad range of undergraduate and postgraduate programs in the areas of marine ecology and biology and collaborate with international partners in the delivery of these programmes. These types of programs include field research training elements which can be provided for at the Maritime Training Facility in Kilrush through the provision of the facilities coupled with the direct access to the Shannon Estuary for the field research elements. At present there is no other facility in Ireland offering a similar 3rd level opportunity. The facility will also look to the overseas network to undertake research training and exchange programs using the unique and diverse amenity that is the Shannon Estuary.

National Collaboration

The Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), acting as a conduit to the 15 other National Education and Training boards, are engaging with Clare MEZ and the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre with a view to potentially offering training opportunities to enable

graduates of their relevant courses to follow a career pathway from junior roles into senior management in the maritime industry. There is further opportunity for collaboration to build on the pilot Maritime Training Course in Kilrush Marina delivered in 2019 by the LCETB and take graduates into the Clare MEZ through the Kilrush Training Centre, thus providing a clear career path and up skilling in the maritime sector.

12.11 Environment

The Shannon Estuary is a unique ecosystem in Ireland and of International significance, being one of the few large estuaries on the Atlantic seaboard of Europe. The importance of the Estuary for birds, plants and animals is acknowledged through the designation of the Estuary as a candidate Special Area of Conservation (*EU Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC*) and a Special Protection Area for birds (*EU Birds Directive 2009/147/EC*).

The Shannon Estuary is also a Marine Protected Area. A Marine Protected Area is a geographically defined area of marine character or influence which is protected through legal means for the purpose of conservation of specified species, habitats or ecosystems and their associated ecosystem services and cultural values and is managed with the intention of achieving stated objectives over the long term.

The Shannon Estuary and its surrounding hinterland is long established as a major communications and transport corridor and as an area for settlement and other human activity. The area is therefore rich in cultural heritage, with many castles and fortifications, crannógs, enclosures, industrial archaeology and religious sites within the vicinity of the shoreline and on the numerous islands throughout the Estuary.

This natural and cultural heritage allied to the attractive rural landscape and small towns and villages in coastal settings result in an environment that is a real asset to the communities living there and to the wider region. The quality environment of the Shannon Estuary provides communities with valued opportunities for accommodation, work, recreation and socialising. Clare County Council will facilitate an integrated and sustainable approach to accommodate development that will not adversely compromise the environment which is the core asset of the region.

Development Plan Objective: Building on the Shannon Estuary as an Environmental Asset	
CDP12.15	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To facilitate appropriate development which is compatible with the areas of the Estuary which are designated under the <i>Habitats and Birds Directives</i> , whilst ensuring that the environment is protected, conserved and maintained and where possible restored, ensuring the dual goals of economic development and environmental conservation can be achieved;

	<p>b) To ensure that all proposed developments shall be in accordance the <i>Birds and Habitats Directive</i>, <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and all other relevant EC Directives;</p> <p>c) To ensure that all proposed developments do not compromise the achievement of the objectives of the <i>River Basin Management Plans</i>, prepared in accordance with the <i>Water Framework Directive</i> and the <i>Flood Risk Management Plans</i> prepared in accordance with the <i>Floods Directive</i>;</p> <p>d) To work in partnership with all relevant statutory and other bodies to support and facilitate the preparation of an Integrated Environmental Management Plan for the Shannon Estuary; and</p> <p>e) To work in partnership with all relevant authorities to support the preparation of a site-specific conservation management plan for the Lower River Shannon cSAC taking into consideration the status of the Shannon Estuary as a Marine Protected Area.</p>
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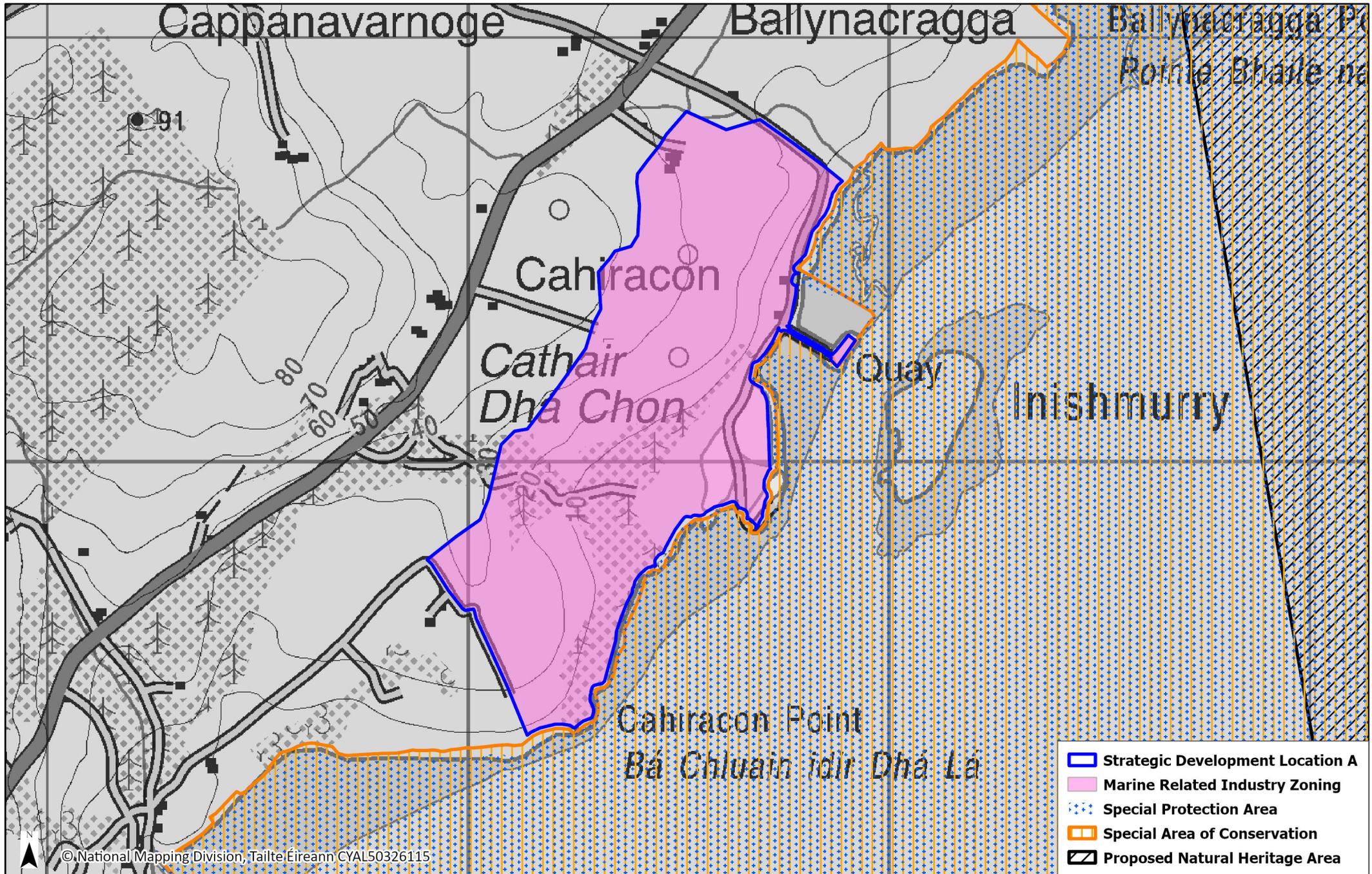
12.12 Water-Borne Transport

The Council recognise the importance of the ferry service between Killimer and Tarbert. The Council will, where required, work with others to identify opportunities for the establishment of additional viable water-borne routes within the Estuary area. This issue is discussed in further detail in Section 11.2.13 Coastal and Estuarine Transportation and Section 11.2.14 Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers.

12.13 Marina Developments

Marina developments have grown in importance and are necessary to cater for the requirements of pleasure craft such as yachts and cruisers. They not only provide services for tourists and local residents involved in water-based activities, but are also an important mechanism through which visitors can access local towns and villages and their associated services and amenities.

Development Plan Objective: Marina Developments	
CDP12.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate the sustainable development of marinas and associated amenities at appropriate locations along the Shannon Estuary ensuring that all such developments shall not adversely affect species and habitats designated by the <i>Birds and Habitats Directives</i> and is in compliance with all relevant environmental objectives.</p>



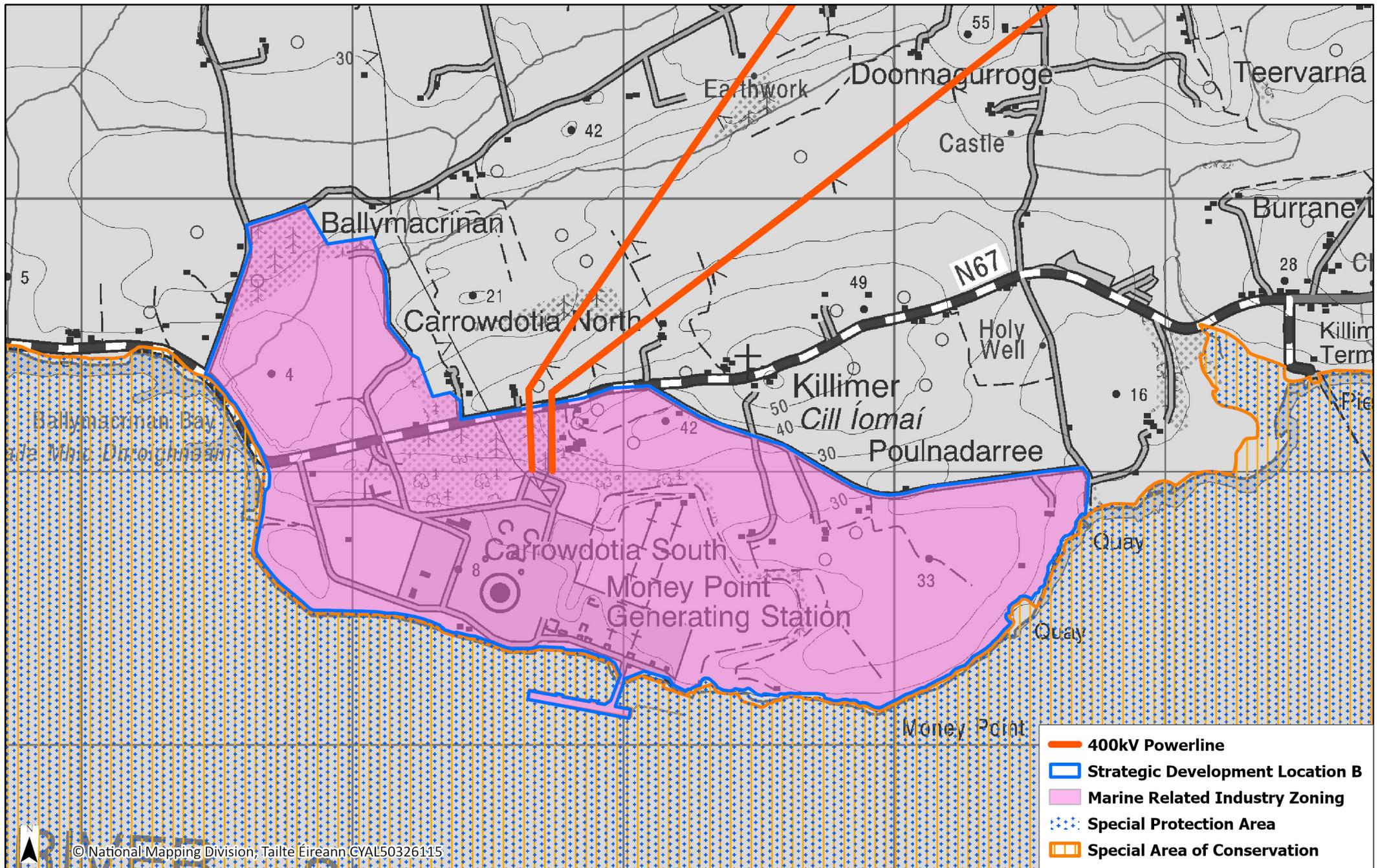
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Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Map 12A Strategic Development Location A

Date: April 2023

Scale: Not To Scale



Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Map 12B Strategic Development Location B

Date: April 2023 Scale: Not To Scale

Chapter 13 Marine, Coastal and Island Management

Goal XIII: A county that maximises and manages the economic, social and recreational potential of the Atlantic Coastline and Shannon Estuary while protecting the coastal zone and its resources and adapting to and managing the challenges of climate change including flooding and sea-level rise.

Chapter 13 Table of Contents

13.0	Introduction
13.1	Strategic Aims
13.2	Management of the Marine and Coastal Area
13.3	Environmental Designations in Coastal Areas
13.4	Management of the Coastal Zone
13.5	Maritime Spatial Planning
13.5.1	EU Marine Spatial Planning Directive (2014)
13.5.2	Planning and Development (Amendment) Act (2018)
13.5.3	Marine Planning Policy Statement (2019)
13.5.4	Maritime Area Planning Act (2021)
13.5.5	National Marine Planning Framework
13.6	Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)
13.7	Coastal and Estuarine Transportation
13.8	Renewable Energy
13.9	The Fishing Industry and Seafood Sector
13.10	Aquaculture
13.11	Shellfish Designations
13.12	Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers
13.13	Coastal Marina Developments
13.14	Coastal Erosion and Flood Defence
13.14.1	Shannon CFRAMS
13.14.2	Coastal Protection in County Clare
13.15	Coastal Squeeze
13.16	Beaches, Sand Dunes, Reefs and Shorelines
13.17	EU Bathing Water Directive
13.18	Island Development

13.0 Introduction

The coastline of County Clare is both extensive and varied and accommodates attractive towns and villages, commercial and recreational activities and a wide array of habitats and species. The coastline is both a valuable and sensitive resource and its ecosystems, which are highly productive, contain high biological diversity, rich fishery resources and significant seabed minerals. The coast supports recreational activities and also industries such as aquaculture, fisheries, shipping and tourism all of which generate significant economic productivity.

County Clare's coastline offers significant potential to grow the 'blue economy' through the harnessing of its marine resources for transport, renewable energy and industrial activities and this economic growth in the marine sector has the potential to create employment and increase prosperity in all parts of the County, especially in coastal communities. The Wild Atlantic Way is one important initiative that has showcased how the natural beauty of this landscape has contributed to the economic development of the coastal areas in recent years.



Coastal resources by their nature are complex and dynamic and an integrated and adaptable management approach is therefore necessary to achieve sustainable growth in coastal areas. While erosion is a normal occurrence, rates of erosion will be accelerated due to rising sea levels caused by climate change and the predicted increase in the frequency of storm surges and high tides. This will increase the extent, severity and recurrence of coastal flooding and new coastal protection schemes may be necessary in the future to protect coastal areas which are vulnerable to erosion.

This Chapter outlines how Clare County Council will manage decisions for our coastal areas to ensure the appropriate and sustainable development of marine resources, the appropriate and sustainable management of coastal erosion and flooding, the protection of habitats and species of importance and the building of climate resilience.

13.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives required to develop and manage marine, coastal and island resources so as to achieve maximum benefits for the people of the County whilst having minimum impacts on the environment. In accordance with the overall vision of the Plan it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To adopt an integrated and collaborative approach to the management of coastal areas in County Clare;
- To balance the protection of sensitive environmental areas with the utilisation of the natural resources in the area;
- To encourage improved access to the marine resources for both visitors and residents of the County;
- To promote the further development of the fishing and aquaculture industries;
- To protect the beaches and sand dunes of the County from degradation and damage;
- To proactively manage and adapt to coastal erosion and flooding issues in the coastal areas of County Clare; and
- To build climate resilient coastal communities which focus on nature based solutions which will ensure the replenishment of our natural capital.

13.2 Management of the Marine and Coastal Area

A diverse and complex range of issues affect coastal areas and coastal communities in County Clare and proactive management is required in order to create sustainable communities, support economic growth, protect the natural environment and achieve balance in the interactions between the multiple users of the coastal area.

13.3 Environmental Designations in Coastal Areas

The County Clare coastline is densely inhabited by a variety of flora and fauna and many of these habitats and species are of national and/or international importance. Therefore, many coastal areas have been designated for environmental protection or conservation under the EU Habitats Directive and/or the EU Birds Directive. Full descriptions of these designations, the impact that the designation may have on a proposed development and the policies and objectives that relate to development in these areas can be found in Chapter 15 Biodiversity, Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure.

Development Plan Objective: Environmental Designations in Coastal Areas	
CDP13.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To promote the sustainable development of the potential of the marine environment; b) To foster opportunities for innovation in the maritime economy and drive forward the County as a first mover under the <i>National Marine Planning Framework (NMPP)</i> and

	<p>the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II (or any finalised version of same), while preserving the environmental and ecological conservation status of our marine natural resource. Close interaction between higher education, state agencies, and enterprise will be facilitated in this regard; and</p> <p>c) To require proposals for development which may impact on a European site to undertake and submit a Natura Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Assessment Report should it be deemed necessary as part of any planning application in accordance with the requirements of the <i>Habitats and EIA Directives</i>.</p>
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13.4 Management of the Coastal Zone

At present management of the coastal zone is the responsibility of various different authorities including the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and the local authorities.

Reforms to the management of the foreshore and offshore areas and the consenting process associated with developments in these areas are currently underway. It is envisaged that these reforms under the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021 will simplify the management structure and expedite the consenting process. Local authorities, including Clare County Council, will also play a stronger role in the management of their coastal areas. In addition the Council will support the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) in fulfilling their functions which will include maritime area consents and licences, compliance and enforcement and the management of the existing State Foreshore portfolio of leases and licenses.

Development Plan Objective: Management Structures	
CDP13.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support and implement the Maritime Area Planning Act 2021;</p> <p>b) To support the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) in the consenting and licensing of the maritime area.</p>

13.5 Maritime Spatial Planning

Maritime spatial planning looks at how multiple users of the ocean come together to make informed and coordinated decisions about how best to sustainably utilise these resources in the future. It seeks to balance the different demands for using the sea including the need to

protect the marine environment. It involves planning when and where human activities take place at sea and ensuring that these activities are as efficient and sustainable as possible.

There is high and rapidly increasing demand for maritime space for different purposes, such as installations for the manufacturing and production of energy from renewable sources, maritime shipping and fishing activities, aquaculture installations, ecosystem and biodiversity conservation, raw material extraction, recreation, tourism and underwater cultural heritage. To address these multiple pressures on coastal resources an integrated planning and management approach is required. EU Directive 2014/89/EU responded to this challenge and established a framework for maritime spatial planning in EU Member States. The main purpose of maritime spatial planning is to promote sustainable development and to identify maritime space for different sea uses as well as to manage spatial uses and conflicts in marine areas.

13.5.1 EU Marine Spatial Planning Directive (2014)

In July 2014 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Directive 2014/89/EU which established a framework for maritime spatial planning aimed at promoting the sustainable growth of maritime economies, the sustainable development of marine areas and the sustainable use of marine resources. Under the Directive each Member State will establish and implement maritime spatial planning and, in doing so, they must also take into account land-sea interactions.

13.5.2 Planning and Development (Amendment) Act (2018)

Part 5 of the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 transposed the 2014 Marine Spatial Planning Directive into primary legislation and this seeks to modernise elements of the marine development management and enforcement systems. In addition to the requirements of the Directive, the Act includes a number of measures which include the adoption of the National Marine Planning Framework by both houses of the Oireachtas and its review/replacement every 6 years, and the obligations of marine regulatory bodies with regard to the implementation of the NMPF and the enforcement powers of the Minister.

13.5.3 Marine Planning Policy Statement (2019)

The Marine Planning Policy Statement (MPPS) 2019 is Ireland's first Marine Planning Policy Statement and serves as a parallel to the 2015 Planning Policy Statement which underpins the operation of the entire land based planning system in Ireland. It reflects the comprehensive updating and renewal of Ireland's marine planning system and sets out core principles to inform the evolving marine planning and development management process. The MPPS outlines a vision for the future development of the marine planning system, sets out the overarching policies and principles the Government expects marine planning bodies and other public bodies that engage with the marine planning system to observe, and sets out high-level priorities for the enhancement of the marine planning system in Ireland.

13.5.4 Maritime Area Planning Act (2021)

The Maritime Area Planning Act is a wide-ranging piece of legislation which seeks to establish in law a new regime for the maritime area and covers all aspects of planning and the marine environment. The Maritime Area Planning Act, *inter alia*:

- Establishes a statutory basis for the preparation of a Marine Planning Policy Statement;
- Introduces powers for the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage to put in place statutory marine planning guidelines (parallel to statutory planning guidelines under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000);
- Provides an enhanced statutory basis for marine forward planning;
- Eliminates the unnecessary duplication of development management processes (including environmental assessments) for activities or developments that are currently assessed under both the foreshore and planning regimes;
- Introduces a single development management process for the Maritime Area for activities or developments that come within the remits of the Ministers for Housing, Local Government and Heritage and Energy, Climate and Communications;
- Establishes an agency, the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority or MARA, to undertake certain functions such as assessing and granting Maritime Area Consents; licensing certain activities and enforcement and compliance in respect of planning decisions by An Bord Pleanála relating to maritime development; and
- Introduces a single State consent system for the maritime area to enable occupation of the foreshore, territorial sea, exclusive economic zone and continental shelf elements of the maritime area as appropriate, along with a new licensing and development management regime, to be administered by the Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA), in conjunction with An Bord Pleanála (ABP) and the coastal local authorities for projects under their jurisdiction;

13.5.5 National Marine Planning Framework

The National Marine Planning Framework is Ireland's first maritime spatial plan and sets out how we want to use, protect and enjoy our seas up to the year 2040 and beyond. It sits at the top of the hierarchy of plans and sectoral policies for the marine area and provides a coherent framework within which sectoral policies and objectives can be realised. It is a decision-making tool for regulatory authorities and policy makers into the future in a number of areas, including decisions on individual consent applications which will have to have regard to the provisions of the plan in the same way that terrestrial plans form part of the decision making tool-kit of the on-land planning process.

In terms of offshore renewable energy, the Draft Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan II (OREDP II), once finalised, will provide a high-level framework for the long-term, sustainable and planned development of Ireland’s immense wind, wave and tidal renewable energy resources. OREDP II is seen as one of the key building blocks of the future, long-term model for the offshore renewable energy sector in Ireland. This long-term model and vision for offshore renewable energy in Ireland is called the “Enduring Regime”. Under the Enduring Regime, the State will ensure that the economic, environmental and societal benefits of ORE are realised for everyone. This includes choosing the right offshore technology to use in the right places through the OREDP II.

OREDP II is key to:

- Meeting our future energy demands;
- Transforming our economy and industry;
- Achieving net-zero carbon emissions;
- Protecting our environment;
- Shared use of our seas.

Development Plan Objective: Maritime Spatial Planning	
CDP13.3	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <p>a) To ensure consistency and alignment between land based spatial planning and marine planning which supports the protection of the marine environment and the growth of the marine economy;</p> <p>b) To support appropriate land-based infrastructure which facilitates marine activity (and vice versa).</p> <p>c) To support proposals for appropriate infrastructure that facilitates the diversification or regeneration of marine industries.</p> <p>d) To ensure all new activities/developments are consistent with the policies of the National Marine Planning Framework.</p> <p>e) To promote the development of a research driven marine cluster in the County to support development of Marine ICT and Biotechnology.</p>

13.6 Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM)

Human impacts, resulting from coastal developments coupled with the impacts of global climate change place continuous pressure on County Clare’s coastal environments. Coastal areas are among the areas most vulnerable to climate change and the impact of climate change on the coastline of County Clare is already evident. These areas will be increasingly susceptible to impacts such as inundation and erosion due to further sea level rise and the

increasing regularity and intensity of extreme weather events. Such impacts are far reaching and are already changing the lives and livelihoods of coastal communities. In order to effectively adapt to climate change in coastal areas, a high level of understanding of the coastal system is required, supported by effective monitoring of vulnerable locations and the identification of when/where remedial action is required.

Chapter 12 sets out the objectives relating to development along the Shannon Estuary, while Chapter 14 identifies the landscape designations along the coastline. Clare County Council, in collaboration with local communities and relevant stakeholders, will encourage the development of the ICZM approach during the lifetime of this Plan to ensure sustainable development and the protection and enhancement of the man-made and natural resources of these areas.

Development Plan Objective: Integrated Coastal Zone Management	
CDP13.4	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work in collaboration with the Southern Regional Assembly, the Government’s Marine Spatial Planning Division, adjoining coastal local authorities, local communities and relevant stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of an Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the coastal and estuarine areas of the County. b) To support the development of new coalitions amongst productive sector enterprises, coastal communities and public agencies to support the sustainable development of the marine resource and Blue Economy.

13.7 Coastal and Estuarine Transportation

There are a number of coastal and estuarine transportation services currently in operation providing important links to both neighbouring counties and to islands off the coast of County Clare. Matters relating to coastal and estuarine transportation are discussed in Sections 12.3 and 12.12 of this Plan.



13.8 Renewable Energy

There is significant potential for renewable energy development along the Atlantic coast of Ireland. The Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (2014) (OREDPA) and the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2022-2028 identify extensive wave, tidal and offshore wind energy potential along the Atlantic coast of County Clare and both the OREDPA and the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary identify the potential for tidal energy generation in the Shannon Estuary.

It is proposed to transform the Moneypoint Power Station site from a fossil fuel burning station to a green energy hub powered by offshore floating wind energy under the ESB's 'Green Atlantic' project which is part of their wider 'Brighter Future' strategy. The Council supports this 'Green Atlantic' project's objectives to ensure efficient production of environmentally sustainable electricity and security/diversity of supply in the future while at the same time ensuring that the environmental integrity of the adjacent coastal and maritime areas is maintained. The Council also supports the principle of wave and tidal energy and recognises the significant benefits that the development of such technologies off the County Clare coast could bring to the County.

Development Plan Objective: Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) Development	
CDP13.5	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To support offshore wind, wave and tidal renewable energy developments and the ancillary land-based infrastructure and service requirements to assist in meeting renewable energy targets subject to environmental

	<p>considerations and the protection of the amenities of the surrounding areas in accordance with the <i>Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (ORED)</i>, the ORE Planning policies as outlined in the <i>National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF)</i> and <i>SIFP SEA Environmental Reports</i> and the <i>Natura Impact Reports</i>; and</p> <p>b) To support the redevelopment of the Moneypoint power generation station site as a green energy hub and the development of the Shannon Estuary as a focal point for the offshore wind industry in Europe.</p>
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13.9 The Fishing Industry and Seafood Sector

The fishing industry is important to County Clare and there is great potential and scope for its promotion and further development. There are commercial fishing operations based at numerous piers and harbours along the coast including Carrigaholt, Quilty and New Quay. In County Clare the fishing industry relates not only to commercial fishing but also to tourism and recreational activities such as deep sea fishing off the West coast and in the Shannon Estuary. In relation to recreational fishing activities, there are numerous local companies running charter deep-sea fishing trips from the piers and harbours along the Shannon Estuary and the West coast. Clare County Council recognises the importance of these companies in providing local employment in coastal areas and also in attracting visitors.

Fisheries Local Action Groups (FLAG's) are committees that manage and administer funding aimed at supporting and diversifying enterprise and increasing employment in Coastal Areas. FLAG's are made up of public and private partners. These partners are from defined geographical areas and include representatives from different sectors of the local economy/community. The committee's members broadly reflect the socioeconomic composition of the area through a balanced representation of the main stakeholders, including private sector, public sector and civil society and ensure a significant representation of the fisheries and/or aquaculture sectors. Clare County Council supports the implementation of the actions outlined in the Fisheries Local Action Group West 'Local Development Strategy'.

Development Plan Objective: The Fishing Industry and Seafood Sector	
CDP13.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To support and facilitate the conservation of marine and freshwater resources that are key to the establishment and sustainable growth of the fishing and aquaculture industry;</p> <p>b) To support the development of new and existing pier facilities for the fishing industry and associated food and service industries, particularly in remote rural coastal communities, where they comply with the general objectives and development management standards of this Plan;</p>

	<p>c) To facilitate, where possible, car parking areas and access points to coastal areas to allow members of the public and tourists to access these areas for fishing and angling purposes.</p> <p>d) To seek investment in the delivery of sustainable actions and development of the seafood sector under existing and future European Maritime and Fisheries Fund Operational Programmes.</p> <p>e) To seek the implementation and investment in actions that support the Fishing Local Area Group (FLAG) Development Strategies to support coastal and island communities.</p>
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13.10 Aquaculture

Aquaculture is carried out in the Shannon Estuary and Galway Bay areas and is significantly focused on the commercial farming of pacific oysters. Carrigaholt specialises in the cultivation of shellfish such as abalone, sea urchin and pacific oyster. Pacific oyster is also farmed in Kilrush and Poulnisharry. While the aquaculture industry is well established in both the Shannon Estuary and Galway Bay significant potential exists for its further development.

Aquaculture on the Clare coast is also a diverse activity and in recent years there has been an increase in the production of seaweed-based cosmetics and food production based on the harvesting of sea vegetables. Clare County Council will support such developments as a means of diversifying the economy and creating employment in coastal areas.

Aquaculture can be highly beneficial to rural and coastal communities, bringing economic growth to areas that can otherwise be isolated from the primary employment centres. County Clare aims to take advantage of the increasing demand for aquaculture products in order to promote the economic wellbeing of the County. It is important to ensure that the benefits of the industry are balanced with environmental considerations and Clare County Council will have regard to the advice and guidance of Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Water Framework Directive Office, the National Marine Planning Framework, the Marine Planning Policy Statement and the Maritime Area Planning Act (2021) in assessing proposed developments and their potential environmental impacts. This topic is also addressed in Section 12.9 Commercial Fishing/Aquaculture on the Estuary.

Development Plan Objective: Aquaculture	
CDP13.7	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support and promote the sustainable development of the aquaculture sector in order to maximise its contribution to employment and growth in coastal communities where it can be demonstrated that the development will not have significant adverse effects on the environment, including the

	integrity of the Natura 2000 network, residential amenity or visual amenity.
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13.11 Shellfish Designations

The European Union’s Shellfish Waters Directive (2006/113/EC) aims to protect or improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth. It is designed to protect the aquatic habitat of bivalve and gastropod molluscs, which include oysters, mussels, cockles, scallops and clams. The Directive requires Member States to designate waters that need protection in order to support shellfish life, and provide for the establishment of pollution reduction programmes for the designated waters. There are five locations along the County Clare coastline that are identified as Designated Shellfish Waters and a Pollution Reduction Programme is in place for each of these areas. These are:

- Galway Bay area:
 - Aughinish Bay
 - Ballyvaughan Poul-na-clough Bay
- Shannon Estuary area:
 - West Shannon Carrigaholt
 - West Shannon Poul-nasharry Bay
 - West Shannon Rinevella

Generally, development is required to have regard to the requirements of the Shannon and Western River Basin Management Plans as these plans make full reference to the protected shellfish waters. Developments adjoining, or in the vicinity of, designated Shellfish Waters must have regard to that designation and ensure that development does not have a negative impact on the quality of the water and European sites in the area.

Development Plan Objective: Shellfish Waters Directive	
CDP13.8	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To work with local communities, relevant stakeholders and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to ensure the proper and successful implementation of the <i>Shellfish Waters Directive</i> on the County Clare coastline.

13.12 Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers

Clare County Council recognises that the maintenance, improvement and in some cases, construction of new piers and harbours is essential in coastal and estuarine areas. These structures, such as the new pier in Doolin are needed to facilitate the activities of the fishing,

tourism and commercial industries on which many coastal communities rely. Clare County Council will encourage the development of new harbour facilities along the Shannon Estuary in order to take advantage of the deepwater conditions in the area in accordance with the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Estuary. The upgrade of other piers on the Estuary and along the Clare coast to facilitate additional marine transport will also be supported.



**Development Plan Objective:
Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers**

CDP13.9

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To seek investment under the Fishery Harbour and Coastal Infrastructure Development Programme and to maintain and improve the network of piers and harbours for which it has responsibility;
- b) To facilitate the maintenance and improvements of the existing port, jetty, harbour, quay and pier infrastructure within the County and to safeguard lands within their vicinity from inappropriate uses that may compromise their long-term economic and recreational potential and environmental setting;
- c) To ensure safe and convenient access to the water from marinas, piers, harbours and slipways for the purposes of public transport, industry, commerce, sea rescue, tourism, aquaculture and recreation;
- d) To encourage and facilitate the use and development of existing port/pier/harbour facilities for commercial fishing in compliance with the requirements of the EU *Habitats Directive*; and
- e) To support development which provides for safety at sea, navigation and maritime search and rescue operations and to ensure that they are key considerations in the assessment of development proposals, in particular, the development or

	expansion of port facilities, or the development of infrastructure in or adjacent to the maritime area including offshore wind farms and other temporary or permanent fixed infrastructure.
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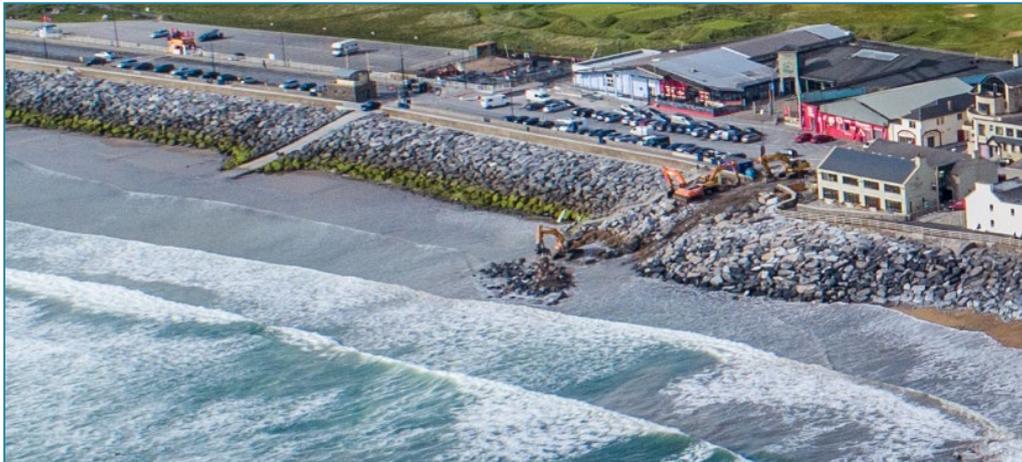
13.13 Coastal Marina Developments

Marina developments have grown in importance and are necessary to cater for the requirements of pleasure crafts such as yachts and cruisers. These marinas provide services for tourists and local residents involved in water-based activities and are also an important mechanism through which visitors can access local towns and villages and their associated services and amenities.

Development Plan Objective: Coastal Marina Developments	
CDP13.10	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate the sustainable development of marinas and associated amenities at appropriate locations along the Atlantic coastline, ensuring that such developments shall not adversely affect species and habitats designated by the <i>Birds and Habitats Directives</i> and is in compliance with all relevant environmental legislation as outlined in Objective CDP3.1 of this plan.

13.14 Coastal Erosion and Flood Defence

The rising sea levels, increased storm frequency and wave energy associated with climate change can increase the rate of erosion, wave damage, coastal flooding amongst other impacts. County Clare is particularly susceptible to the impacts of these coastal changes and predicted rises in sea levels will compound these issues in the future. To assist in building climate resilience in coastal areas it is necessary to actively manage the coastal environment and the risks associated with these anticipated changes. It is also necessary to ensure that new developments take account of future risk from coastal erosion, storm surges and sea level rise and, where possible, employ ecosystem-based adaptation actions to manage climate risk and build resilience to climate change. Clare County Council has prepared a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, contained in Volume 10 of this Plan, which has informed the Plan and which identifies areas at risk from flooding and indicates the level of risk associated with each area.



13.14.1 Shannon CFRAMS

Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management Studies (CFRAMS) and their product – Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) – are at the core of the national policy for flood risk management and the strategy for its implementation. Each CFRAM Study includes the collection of survey data, and the assembly and analysis of meteorological, hydrological and tidal data, which is used to develop a suite of hydraulic computer models. Flood maps are one of the main outputs of the study and are the way in which the model results are communicated to each of the end users. The studies assess a range of potential options to manage the flood risk, and determine, if there are viable options, which option is preferred for each area and recommended for implementation within the Flood Risk Management Plans.

The OPW, working in partnership with Clare County Council (CCC) and other Local Authorities, commissioned and have completed the Shannon Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Study. The objectives of the CFRAM Study were to:

- Identify and map the existing and potential future flood hazard within the CFRAM Study Area;
- Assess and map the existing and potential future flood risk within the CFRAM Study Area;
- Identify viable structural and non-structural options and measures for the effective and sustainable management of flood risk in the Areas for Further Assessment (AFA's) and within the CFRAM Study Area as a whole; and
- Prepare a set of Flood Risk Management Plans (FRMPs) for the CFRAM Study Area, and associated Strategic Environmental and, as necessary, Habitats Directive (Appropriate) Assessment, that sets out the policies, strategies, measures and actions that should be pursued by the relevant bodies, including the OPW, Local Authorities and other Stakeholders, to achieve the most cost-effective and sustainable management of

existing and potential future flood risk within the Study Area, taking account of environmental plans, objectives and legislative requirements and other statutory plans and requirements.

The Shannon CFRAM Study Area included Shannon Town and Environs, Kilrush, Kilkee, Killaloe, Bunratty and Springfield as both an AFA (Area for Further Assessment) and IRR (Individual Risk Receptor), and concluded that a flood relief scheme would be viable and effective for these communities.

To advance and implement these flood relief schemes Clare County Council is progressing the Bunratty, Kilkee, Shannon Town and Environs and Springfield Flood Relief Schemes. Kilrush will be progressed as a Minor Flood Relief Scheme whilst Killaloe is being progressed by Tipperary County Council. The objective of these projects is the identification and design of Flood Relief Schemes that are technically, socially, environmentally and economically acceptable so as to alleviate the risk of flooding to the communities in these areas.

13.14.2 Coastal Protection in County Clare

The Office of Public Works (OPW), as part of their Coastal Protection Strategy Study has carried out an assessment of erosion hazard and potential risk in coastal areas around Ireland. A series of erosion maps were produced which facilitate a strategic assessment of erosion hazard and provides valuable information on the economic value of assets at potential risk from erosion. The erosion mapping also facilitates consideration of the hazard and potential risks to future proposed development near the coastline (both strategic and non-strategic) at the planning stage. The erosion maps were produced primarily as a tool to identify any assets likely to be affected by coastal erosion by 2030 and 2050. It should be noted that the assessment did not include a consideration of future climate change scenarios and the likely impact on erosion hazard and potential risk. The outcome of the assessment was taken into consideration in the preparation of this Plan.

As part of the Coastal Protection Strategy Study a strategic assessment of the extent of coastal flooding was also undertaken. This strategic assessment predicted mid-range and high-end future scenarios for flooding in coastal and estuarine areas up to 2030 and 2050. In addition to this study, Coastal Flood and Erosion Risk Management Studies were undertaken for:

- Cloghauninchy; and
- Liscannor Bay, incorporating:
 - Lahinch;
 - Liscannor; and
 - Clahane.

Similar studies are also underway for:

- Kilbaha

- Mal Bay, incorporating:
 - Quilty village to Seafield;
 - Spanish Point; and
 - White Strand, Miltown Malbay.

The Council will proactively seek funding from the Office of Public Works (OPW) for the progression of the recommendations set out in the completed studies. Clare County Council will also seek to repair and/or replace coastal protection infrastructure using the Minor Works Scheme operated by the OPW.

Development Plan Objective: Coastal Erosion and Flooding	
CDP13.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To engage with the OPW so it develops appropriate strategies for the management of identified coastal flood and erosion hazards and associated risks; b) To have regard to the <i>Clare County Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, CFRAM Flood Risk Management Plans, the OPW Coast Protection Strategy Study</i>, and any updated version/more detailed local studies, in the assessment of development applications in coastal areas; c) To permit developments only where the Council is satisfied that they will not be at risk from coastal erosion or inundation in the future; d) To permit developments only where the Council is satisfied that it will not result in an increase in coastal erosion or increase the risk of inundation, either at the subject site or at another location in the vicinity; e) To only permit development outside the boundaries of existing settlements where such development can be adequately defended over the lifetime of the development without the need to construct additional or new coastal defences; f) To support and facilitate the carrying out of coastal defence works based on the outcome of detailed Coastal Erosion and Flood Risk Management Studies undertaken in areas identified as being at risk from coastal flooding; g) To ensure full compliance with the requirements of the <i>Habitats Directive, Water Framework Directive</i> and overarching environmental Objective CDP3.1 of this plan with regard to development in the coastal area; h) To have regard to any future adopted Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the coastal and estuarine areas

of the County, undertaken in accordance with the *Habitats and SEA Directive*.

13.15 Coastal Squeeze

Coastal squeeze is defined as the squeeze of coastal ecosystem such as beaches, salt marshes, mud and sand flats, between rising sea levels and naturally or artificially fixed shorelines (including hard engineering defences). A significant threat to coastal organisms is loss of habitat and this can occur where structures are built to protect lands and/or infrastructure from erosion or flooding.

These structures effectively ‘fix’ the coastline and dynamic habitats and ecosystems that would normally move landward in response to coastal change (from influences such as sea level rise and erosion) by preventing them from doing so through the use of built structures. The habitat/ecosystem then effectively becomes ‘squeezed’ between the rising sea levels and the physical barrier. This is exacerbated by global warming, which not only leads to higher sea levels, but also an increase of the storm frequency. See Figure 12.1 Coastal Squeeze.

Development Plan Objective: Coastal Squeeze	
CDP13.12	It is an objective of the Development Plan: To ensure that coastal squeeze is taken into consideration in formulating and assessing coastal development proposals.

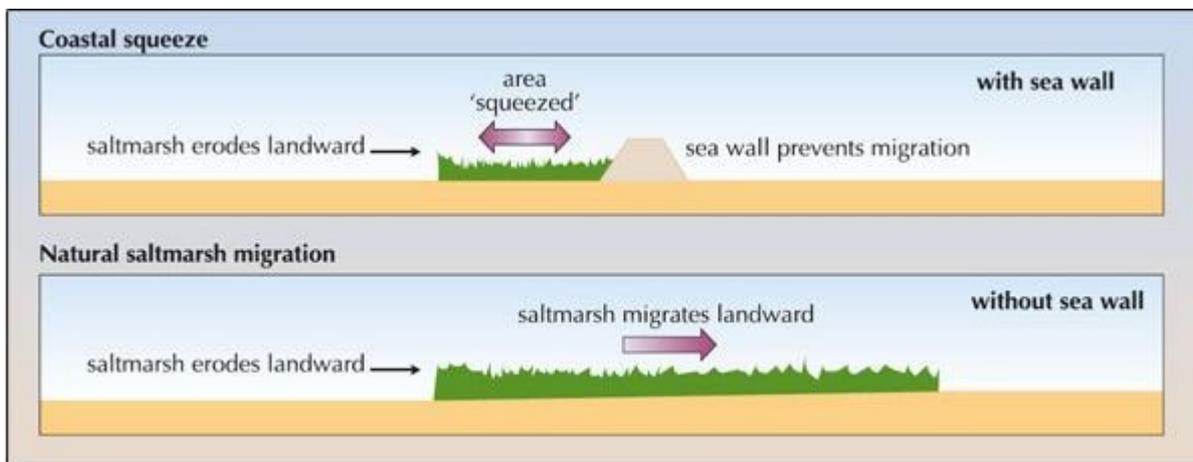


Figure 12.1 Coastal Squeeze

13.16 Beaches, Sand Dunes, Reefs and Shorelines

The beaches, sand dunes, reefs and shorelines of County Clare are an invaluable natural resource. They not only attract visitors to the area but also provide a base for a wide range of recreational activities that are enjoyed by both visitors and local residents alike. They also provide an important habitat for a wide range of flora, fauna and marine life.

Sand dunes and reefs, whilst also forming rich and varied habitats also form effective natural coastal defences. Interference with the dunes and reefs can have serious impacts on the coasts. Sand dunes can be vulnerable to damage from a variety of sources including extreme weather events or human activities such as quad biking and/or the creation of multiple tracks/walking routes through the dunes. Such events/activities can cause instability and result in increased erosion of a dune system. In some cases dune stabilisation or regeneration may be required (e.g. through dune profiling, fencing, planting or, in some areas, the provision of boardwalks to allow beach access without further damage to dune systems).



The Council will review the status of important dune systems in the County as part of a wider programme of coastal management. It is important, not only to the economy of coastal areas, but also in the interest of protecting natural amenities, that the beaches and sand dunes of the County are protected and proactively managed.

Development Plan Objective: Protection of Beaches and Sand Dunes	
CDP13.13	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To permit maritime development on sites either on or adjacent to any beach area, only where such developments would not significantly interfere with the recreational use of the area or would not cause damage or degradation of the beaches or sand dune system; b) To assist all relevant stakeholders to proactively monitor and manage the dune systems in the County in full compliance with the EU Habitats Directive; and c) To protect the structure and function of sand dunes within the County, (which include Annex I habitats and Annex II species), and to ensure that any permitted development would support the integrity (ecological and visual) of these

areas and comply with the requirements of the *Habitats and Birds Directives*.

13.17 EU Bathing Water Directive

The EU Bathing Water Directive aims to improve water quality, enable the improvement of water monitoring and management and ensure that information is made available to the public. Beaches that comply with ‘excellent’ standard in accordance with the EU Bathing Water Directive can be awarded the Blue Flag. Beaches and marinas that achieve this accolade must comply with a specific set of criteria relating to water quality, information provision, environmental education, safety and beach management.



The Green Coast Award is for beaches which have excellent water quality, but which are also prized for their natural, unspoilt environment and therefore are often located in more rural/remote areas. Coastal initiatives such as Clean Coasts, the Green Coast Award and the Blue Flag scheme are supported by Clare County Council to ensure that the County’s coastal areas and bathing waters are maintained to the highest standards.

Development Plan Objective: EU Bathing Water Directive

CDP13.14 It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To support coastal initiatives such as the Green Coast Award, Clean Coasts and Blue Flag scheme and seek to ensure that coastal areas and bathing waters are maintained to the highest levels; and
- b) To work to retain Blue Flag and Green Coast status on beaches currently awarded this status whilst seeking to increase the present number of such beaches.

13.18 Island Development

There are approximately 98 islands located along the Atlantic coast of County Clare and in the Shannon and Fergus Estuaries. Some of the larger islands, particularly in the Shannon and

Fergus Estuaries, are used for agricultural purposes. Many of the islands, both along the coast and inland, are of significant historical importance. The islands are also highly valuable from an environmental perspective, offering habitats to many species of flora and fauna. For these reasons, the islands are particularly susceptible to damage from inappropriate development.

Development Plan Objective: Island Development	
CDP13.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support and facilitate infrastructure, and access/landing facilities, and development proposals that will contribute to the long-term social, heritage, ecological and cultural development of the islands; b) To have regard to any environmental and/or heritage-related designation in the assessment of all applications for development on the islands; c) To preserve appropriate and sustainable access to all islands, including uninhabited ones; d) To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation as outlined in Objective CDP3.1 of this plan.

Chapter 14 Landscape

Goal XIV: A county of ‘living landscapes’ where people live, work, recreate and visit while respecting, managing and taking pride in the unique landscape of the County

Chapter 14 Table of Contents

14.0	Introduction
14.1	Strategic Aims
14.2	Evolution of Landscape Management in County Clare
14.2.1	Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare
14.2.1.1	Introduction
14.2.1.2	Landscape Character Types
14.2.1.3	Landscape Character Areas
14.3	Clare’s Living Landscapes
14.3.1	Background
14.3.2	Living Landscape Types
14.3.2.1	Settled Landscapes
14.3.2.2	Working Landscapes
14.3.2.3	Heritage Landscapes
14.4	Seascape Character Areas
14.5	Views and Prospects
14.6	Applications for Single Houses in the Countryside

14.0 Introduction

County Clare accommodates areas of significant landscape value which are important for both their natural beauty and for the opportunities they provide for recreation, tourism and other uses. Clare is a County of contrast with a variety of landscapes including the karstified Burren landscape, the Cliffs of Moher, the coastal peninsulas and estuarine landscapes of West and South Clare, the lake lands and waterways of East Clare, the uplands of Sliabh Bernagh and the Slieve Aughty mountains, and the drumlins to the west of Ennis.

The European Landscape Convention (ELC), also known as the Florence Convention came into force in Ireland in March 2004 and this Development Plan supports the key tenets of that Convention. This defines ‘landscape’ as ‘an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors’. As well as being an important part of peoples’ lives - giving individuals and communities a sense of identity and belonging and bestowing a sense of place on our surroundings – the landscape is the context in which all change takes place. The importance of landscape and visual amenity and the role of planning in its protection, is recognised in the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, which requires that development plans include objectives for the preservation of the landscape, views and prospects, and the amenities of places and features of natural beauty.

14.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter sets out the objectives required to sustainably manage the diverse landscapes of County Clare. In accordance with the overall vision of the plan, it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To ensure the implementation of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 in County Clare;
- To implement the ‘Clare’s Living Landscapes’ approach to landscape management and enhancement throughout the County;
- To encourage the utilisation of the Clare County Landscape Character Assessment in both the preparation and assessment of planning applications;
- To utilise the ‘Clare Living Landscapes’ approach to ensure that development in the County takes place in the location / landscape deemed most appropriate; and
- To sustain the natural and cultural heritage of the County.

14.2 Evolution of Landscape Management in County Clare

This is the eighth Clare County Development Plan and the consistency shown in policy approaches since 1967 demonstrates the importance that has always been attributed to areas such as the Burren, the Atlantic Coast, Lough Derg, the Shannon Estuary and upland areas such as the Sliabh Aughty Mountains and to views and prospects of importance in the County. This demonstrates an acceptance of the importance of these areas by policy makers for the County for over 40 years. This Plan seeks, through the *Clare’s Living Landscapes* approach, to

continue to meet the statutory objectives of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, while at the same time reassuring communities that they are integral to the future of these areas.

14.2.1 Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare

14.2.1.1 Introduction

The National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 sets out specific measures to promote the protection, management and planning of the landscape. By increasing understanding of landscape and its dynamic interactive characteristics, the Strategy aims to deal with competing objectives while improving the decision-making process. Both the NPF and the RSES include objectives which seek to facilitate landscape protection, management and change through the preparation of National Landscape Character Maps, Regional Landscape Strategies and guidance on the preparation of local landscape character assessments. The implementation of the National Landscape Strategy will see Landscape Character Assessments being prepared at local and intra-local authority level, using the Landscape Character Assessment Guidelines. These regional and local landscape character assessments will inform and guide landscape policy, action plans and local authority development plans.

One of the main actions of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 is the commitment to develop a National Landscape Character Assessment following on from which it is the intention to prepare statutory guidelines on local Landscape Character Assessment and other appropriate assessment methodologies for Planning Authorities. The National Landscape Character Assessment and any associated guidelines have not yet been published. As such the Council considers that it would be prudent to await the completion of a National Character Assessment before embarking on a comprehensive review of the County Clare Landscape Strategy.

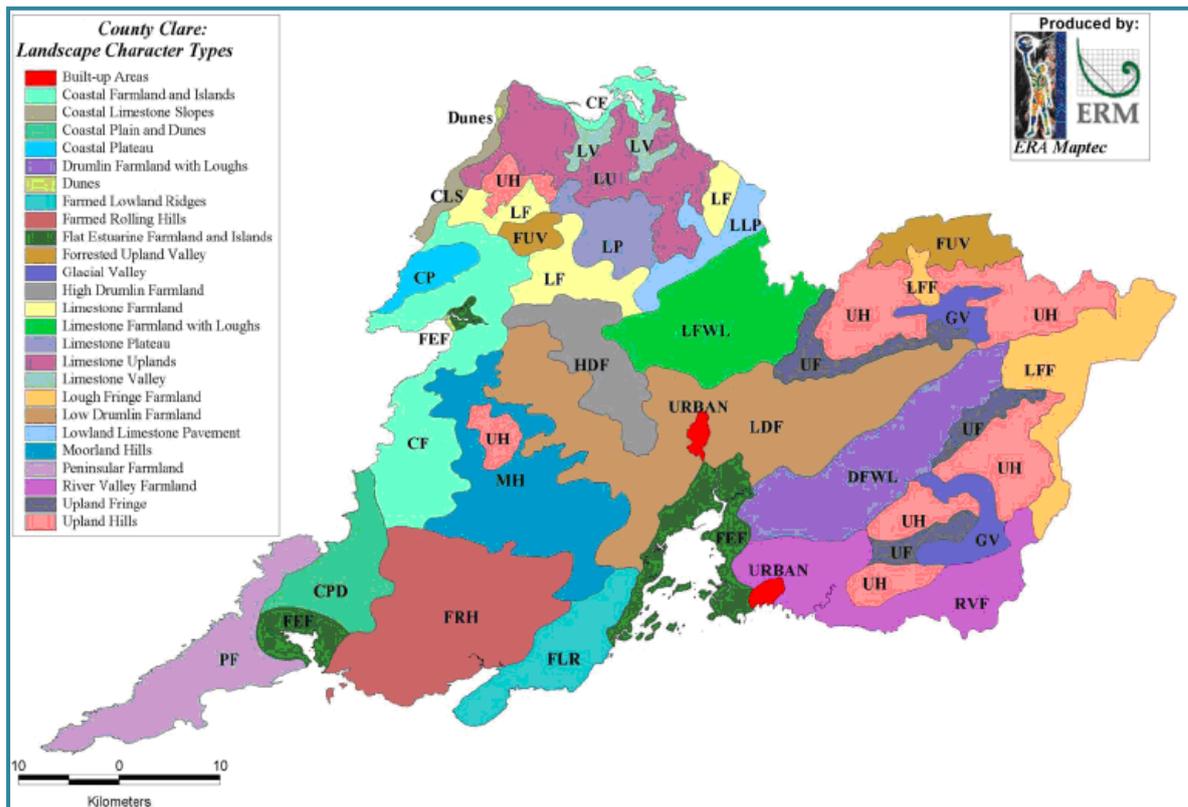
Landscape character comprises of a distinct, recognisable and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape that makes one landscape different from another and which makes an area unique. In County Clare, Environmental Resources Management (ERM), in association with ERA-Maptec Ltd, was commissioned by the Heritage Council in August 2002 to undertake a 'Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare'. This provides an analysis of the character, value, and sensitivity of landscapes identified in the County and provides an excellent resource for the Council and the communities that live and work within these areas. By understanding how different landscapes have developed and evolved from both a natural and social perspective, informed decisions relating to the management and planning of the landscape can be made. Also, as landscape character assessments seek the views of communities living within particular areas, the process encourages debate and assists in developing consensus on what is distinctive about each landscape. In turn, this facilitates a stronger understanding and engenders a greater appreciation of the considerable landscape resource of communities throughout the County. The landscape character assessment provides guidance on the key characteristics of different areas, the land cover, ecology and also the current condition of the landscape and how sensitive it is to change and the

assessment should be used by agents/applicants when preparing development proposals. For applications for houses in the countryside applicants/agents are also advised to have regard to the 'County Clare Rural House Design Guide'.

14.2.1.2 Landscape Character Types

Landscape character types are distinct types of landscape that are relatively homogenous in character. They are generic in nature in that they may occur in different localities throughout the County. Nonetheless, where they do occur, they commonly share similar combinations of geology, topography, land cover and historical land use. For example, limestone river valleys or blanket bog uplands are distinct landscape character types and are recognisable as such whether they occur in County Clare or other counties. The Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare firstly identifies 26 Landscape Character Types which are grouped into Upland Types, Lowland Types and Coastal Types. These are shown below.

Figure 14.1 Map of Landscape Character Types



Source: *Environmental Resources Management (2003)*

The assessment also identifies Habitat Types and Historic Landscape Types. A Habitat Type comprises of an area in which an organism or group of organisms lives, and is defined by the living (biotic) and non-living (abiotic) components of the environment. The latter includes physical, chemical and geographical factors, in addition to human impact or management.

Archaeological or historical landscapes are also identified in the Landscape Character Assessment and comprise of discrete landscapes based on the scale and integrity of the archaeological features that reflect significantly on the human history and land use of that area.

One of the aims of the Landscape Character Assessment was to integrate these components so that Landscape Character Areas for the County could be defined.

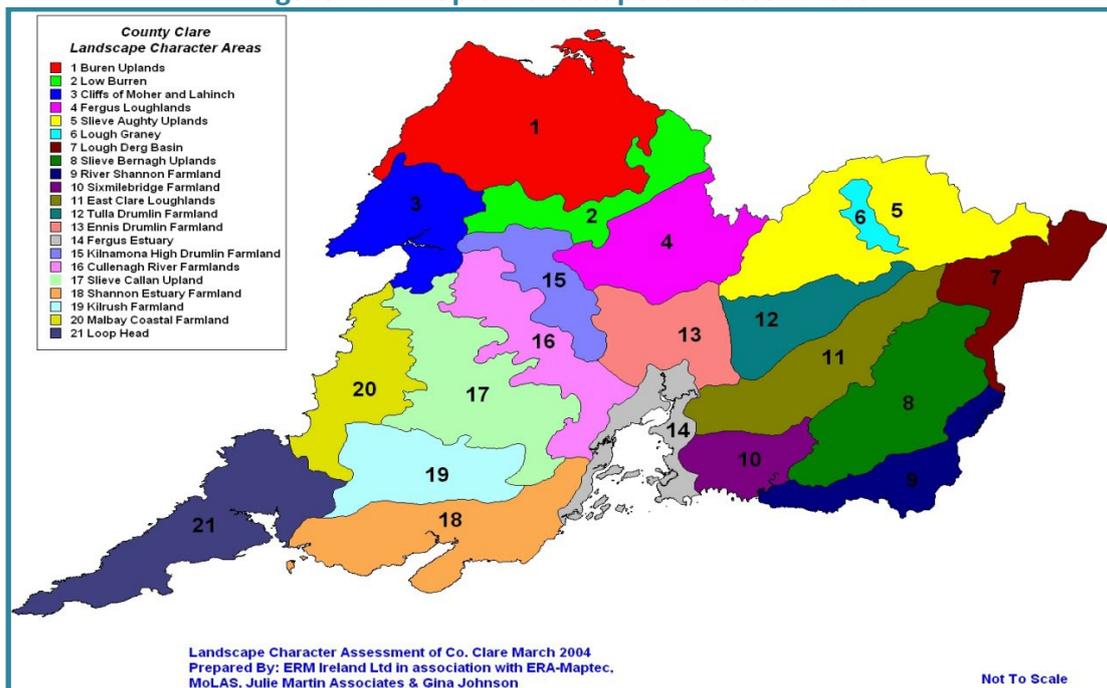
14.2.1.3 Landscape Character Areas

‘Landscape Character Areas’ (LCA) are defined as:

“Units of the landscape that are geographically specific and have their own character and sense of place. Each LCA has its own distinctive character, based upon patterns of geology, landform, land use, cultural, historical and ecological features.”

The ‘Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare’ identifies 21 Landscape Character Areas and these are illustrated in the map below.

Figure 14.2 Map of Landscape Character Areas



Source: Environmental Resources Management (2003)

Development Plan Objective: Landscape Character Assessment	
CDP14.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To encourage the utilisation of the <i>Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare</i> , the forthcoming Regional

Landscape Strategy and other relevant landscape policy and guidelines and to have regard to them in the facilitation, protection and management of appropriate landscape change in County Clare.

b) To review and update the *County Clare Landscape Strategy* as soon as is practicable following the publication of the National Landscape Character Assessment and taking any associated guidelines.

14.3 Clare’s Living Landscapes

14.3.1 Background

The word ‘Landscape’ is often regarded as a restrictive term that relates only to visual appearance with little regard to the needs of the communities and landowners that shape it. More positive and proactive policies have been sought that will provide support for the vitality of rural communities. To address this issue, the Development Plan sets out a series of ‘Living Landscapes’ – where different parts of the County are regarded as having different potential in terms of how communities can pursue their ambitions and aspirations. This approach is based on areas maximising their strengths. For example, some areas have strong potential for tourism based on their heritage and scenery, while others have different potential due to proximity to major roads or power lines. As a result, different approaches that are the most suitable for each area can be accommodated. Such an approach also regards the landscape as a living entity where people live and work and which changes and evolves in line with the changing needs of the community.

The Development Plan is required to take account of the large and complex zones of environmental sensitivity including ecology, biodiversity, scenery, heritage and water sensitivity. In this regard multiple designations in an area can result in uncertainty, delays and conflict. To address this and to simplify the planning process generalised area ‘Landscapes’ have been identified within the County. These ‘Landscapes’ share similar characteristics and clear policies relate to each area. These designations and policies will assist in sustaining the identity of each of these different areas and will also help people to continue to use the countryside.

In the assessment of the interaction and integration of a proposed development within the receiving landscape, issues including the visibility and prominence of the development from available vantage points, the potential changes to the character of these views (including views from Scenic Routes, heritage sites and other important locations), the capacity of the landscape to accommodate the development, the height, bulk, scale, massing and finishes of the development and the cumulative impact of the development are all considered.

14.3.2 Living Landscape Types

County Clare comprises a number of areas that have similar characteristics for which similar planning policies are applicable. A description of each area is provided below along with the criteria used to define their boundaries. The descriptions outline the vision and future roles of the landscape areas together with policies/objectives that will guide development in these areas.

Policies that reflect the common good may occasionally result in the refusal of planning permission or the inclusion of conditions on planning permissions. However, the objective is to ensure that planning decisions will have wide support, so that in the context of the agreed policies which are there for the good of all, these decisions will be seen to be appropriate, fair, consistent and based on reasons that are clear. These planning policies will be successful if they:

- Increase consensus that planning decisions are being made for the good of all but especially for the good of the community which sustains the landscape;
- Increase confidence about the type, location and design of development that will be acceptable;
- Increase the consistency of decisions between one application and the next in similar circumstances;
- Reduce the number of planning applications being made that do not conform with policies.

The Development Plan therefore identifies three types of landscape, as follows:

- i. Settled landscapes – areas where people live and work;
- ii. Working Landscapes – intensively settled and developed areas within Settled Landscapes or areas with a unique natural resource;
- iii. Heritage Landscapes – areas where natural and cultural heritage are given priority and where development is not precluded but happens more slowly and carefully.

Each area is described below and outlined in Map 14A.

14.3.2.1 Settled Landscapes

‘Settled Landscapes’ comprise the network of farmland, villages and towns that make up the majority of the County. These landscapes are where the majority of the population live and work. They provide opportunities for enterprise, leisure and personal fulfilment. They contain the resources of land, soil, minerals and water that are used to sustain the economy. They accommodate the roads, power-lines, quarries and piped services that service settlements and industry. ‘Settled Landscapes’ also contain areas of concentrated development – called ‘Working Landscapes’ which are considered in more detail below. Uses envisaged within ‘Settled Landscapes’ include agriculture, energy, forestry, extraction, transportation,

industry, commerce, tourism, recreation, leisure, education, residential, healthcare and social infrastructure.

Criteria for Definition of a Settled Landscape

All lands not classified as Heritage or Working Landscapes.

Development Plan Objective: Settled Landscapes	
CDP14.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To permit development in areas designated as ‘settled landscapes’ to sustain and enhance quality of life and residential amenity and promote economic activity subject to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Conformity with all other relevant provisions of the Plan and the availability and protection of resources; II. Selection of appropriate sites in the first instance within this landscape, together with consideration of the details of siting and design which are directed towards minimising visual impacts; III. Regard being had to the need to avoid intrusion on scenic routes and on ridges or shorelines. <p>Developments in these areas will be required to demonstrate:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) That the site has been selected to avoid visual prominence b) That the site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, water bodies, public amenities and roads. c) That design of buildings and structures reduces visual impact through careful choice of forms, finishes and colours, and that any site works seek to reduce visual impact.

Many areas within the Settled Landscapes of County Clare contain ground and surface waters that are sensitive to the risk of pollution and coincide with areas identified for nature conservation. Applicants for planning permission are advised that rigorous standards will be applied at all stages of the evaluation of site suitability, site design and the design and management of all installations for the interception, storage and treatment of all effluents.

14.3.2.2 Working Landscapes

‘Working Landscapes’ are those areas within ‘Settled Landscapes’ that contain pockets of concentrated development or a unique natural resource. The Plan identifies the following two such landscapes in the County:

- i. The Western Corridor - Ennis to Limerick Working Landscape
- ii. The Shannon Estuary Working Landscape

Western Corridor Working Landscape

This part of the County contains the highest concentrations of population and employment and the strongest transport links and connectivity. It includes a large part of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area and the County Town/Key Town of Ennis. It is the economic driver of County Clare and an important area of the Mid-West and Southern Region.

Criteria for Definition of the Western Corridor Working Landscape

- All lands within 10km on either side of the N18/M18 – except as excluded by Heritage Landscapes.

Development Plan Objective: Western Corridor Working Landscape	
CDP14.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) To permit development in these areas that will sustain economic activity, and enhance social well-being and quality of life - subject to conformity with all other relevant provisions of the Plan and the availability and protection of resources; b) To ensure that selection of appropriate sites in the first instance within this landscape, together with consideration of the details of siting and design, are directed towards minimising visual impact; c) To ensure that particular regard should be had to avoiding intrusions on scenic routes and on ridges or shorelines. Developments in these areas will be required to demonstrate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the site has been selected to avoid visual prominence ii. That site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, public amenities and roads iii. That design of buildings and structures reduces visual impact through careful choice of form, finishes and colours and that any site works seek to reduce the visual impact of the development.

Many areas within the ‘Western Corridor Working Landscape’ contain ground and surface waters that are sensitive to the risk of pollution and also coincide with areas identified for nature conservation. Applicants for planning permission are advised that rigorous standards will be applied at all stages of the evaluation of site suitability, site design and the design and management of all installations for the interception, storage and treatment of all effluents.

The Shannon Estuary Working Landscape

The Lower Shannon Estuary contains a nationally significant concentration of economic and natural resources. Extensive areas of sheltered deep water combined with one of the largest concentrations of high voltage transmission and generation capacity in the Country, as well as adjacency to Shannon International Airport, provide opportunities for the development of large-scale shipping, transshipment, logistics, manufacturing and associated economic and service activities.

Criteria for Definition of the Shannon Estuary Working Landscape

- All shores and waters between Moneypoint to Ballynacragga Point excluding Clonderlaw Bay.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon Estuary Working Landscape	
CDP14.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To permit development in these areas that will sustain economic activity of regional and national significance – especially through the protection of resources to sustain large-scale energy projects, logistics, large-scale manufacturing and associated infrastructure. All such developments shall be required to conform to relevant management and conservation objectives for designated and protected habitats and species within the estuary;</p> <p>b) To ensure that selection of appropriate sites in the first instance within this landscape, together with consideration of the details of siting and design, are directed towards reducing visual impact and that residual visual impacts are minimised;</p> <p>c) To ensure that particular regard be had to avoiding intrusions on scenic routes and on ridges or shorelines;</p> <p>d) To ensure that developments in these areas be required to demonstrate:</p> <p>i. That sites have been selected to avoid visually prominence wherever feasible;</p>

	<p>ii. That site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to reduce visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, public amenities and roads;</p> <p>iii. That design for buildings and structures reduces visual impact through careful choice of form, finish and colours and that any site works seek to reduce visual impact of the development.</p>
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The majority of the areas within the ‘Shannon Estuary Working Landscape’ contain sites, species, habitats and natural resources that are protected under the provisions of the Habitats Directive and/or the Birds Directive. Many areas within the ‘Shannon Estuary Working Landscape’ also contain ground and surface waters that are sensitive to the risk of pollution. Applicants for planning permission in these areas will be expected to familiarise themselves with the requirements in relation to the protection of water resources and should be aware of the likely need to prepare and submit a Natura Impact Statement should the Council determine that Appropriate Assessment is required in accordance with the requirements of Article 6 of the Habitats Directive in tandem with the preparation of designs.

14.3.2.3 Heritage Landscapes

‘Heritage Landscapes’ are those areas within the County where sensitive environmental resources – scenic, ecological and historic - are located. These landscapes are envisioned as the most valued parts of the County, that are important to the people of County Clare as well as to wider national and international communities. The principal role of these landscapes is to sustain natural and cultural heritage. The word ‘sustain’ is used to convey the idea of keeping something alive, as opposed to ‘conserve’ or ‘preserve’ which might imply that something is static.

These landscapes must evolve to accommodate both the renewal of existing houses, farms, roads, power-lines and other facilities as well as the development of new facilities needed to support the community. This is particularly the case in areas where agriculture can no longer provide sufficient income to sustain rural households. Uses within these landscapes are expected to include refurbishment of dwellings, new dwellings for members of the existing rural community and developments for agriculture, small-scale employment, tourism, forestry, education, cultural and social services.

Plans, policies and development decisions in these areas will always need to simultaneously take account of scenic, ecological and historical considerations.

Heritage Landscapes and their hinterlands may contain vernacular structures which are valuable examples of the form and patterns of building which have evolved to suit their landscape both in their design and in their siting. Such forms and patterns should be recorded for historic purposes but also because they may provide a useful template to guide the siting of new structures thus reducing their visual impact.

Criteria for Definition of Heritage Landscapes

Heritage Landscape 1: Lough Derg and the Eastern Uplands

This has been defined by having regard to the Heritage Council’s LCA Study Unit 5 Slieve Aughty Uplands, Unit 6 Lough Graney and Unit 7 Lough Derg Basin

Heritage Landscape 2: The Burren

This has been defined by having regard to the Heritage Council’s LCA Study Unit 1 Burren Uplands, Unit 2 Low Burren and Unit 4 Fergus Loughlands.

Heritage Landscape 3: The Fergus/ Shannon Estuary

This has been defined by having regard to the Heritage Council’s LCA Seascape Areas 9-12, as shown on Figure 14.3.

Heritage Landscape 4: The Coast

This has been defined by having regard to the Heritage Council’s LCA Seascape Areas 1-8, as shown on Figure 14.3.

Development Plan Objective: Heritage Landscapes	
CDP14.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To require that all proposed developments in Heritage Landscapes demonstrate that every effort has been made to reduce visual impact. This must be demonstrated for all aspects of the proposal - from site selection through to details of siting and design. All other relevant provisions of the Development Plan and the <i>RSES</i> must be complied with. All proposed developments in these areas will be required to demonstrate;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. That sites have been selected to avoid visual prominence II. That site layouts avail of existing topography and vegetation to minimise visibility from scenic routes, walking trails, public amenities and roads; III. That design for buildings and structures minimises height and visual contrast through careful choice of forms, finishes and colour and that any site works seek to reduce the visual impact of the development.

Planning applications in ‘Heritage Landscapes’ will generally be required to include landscape and visual impact assessments to demonstrate that the related objectives are being achieved.

The majority of the areas within 'Heritage Landscapes' contain sites, species, habitats and natural resources that are protected under the provisions of the Habitats Directive and/or the Birds Directive. Applicants will be expected to familiarise themselves with the requirements of the Directives and should be aware of the likely need to prepare and submit a Natura Impact Statement should the Council determine that Appropriate Assessment is required in accordance with the requirements of the Habitats Directive in tandem with the preparation of designs.

The majority of the areas within 'Heritage Landscapes' contain ground and surface waters that are sensitive to the risk of pollution. Applicants for planning permission are advised that rigorous standards will be applied at all stages of the evaluation of site suitability, site design and the design and management of all installations for the interception, storage and treatment of all effluents.

Many areas within 'Heritage Landscapes' contain significant concentrations of National Monuments. Applicants are advised that developments will be evaluated to ensure that both monuments and their settings are protected to the standards required by the relevant statutory authorities. It is recognised that within 'Heritage Landscapes' these requirements will place yet another obligation on applicants who will also need to demonstrate compliance with the Habitats Directive and the Water Framework Directive. For this reason, it will be Council policy to investigate the feasibility of offering pre-application technical assistance to applicants on appropriate sites within these areas to minimise any issues that might otherwise occur.

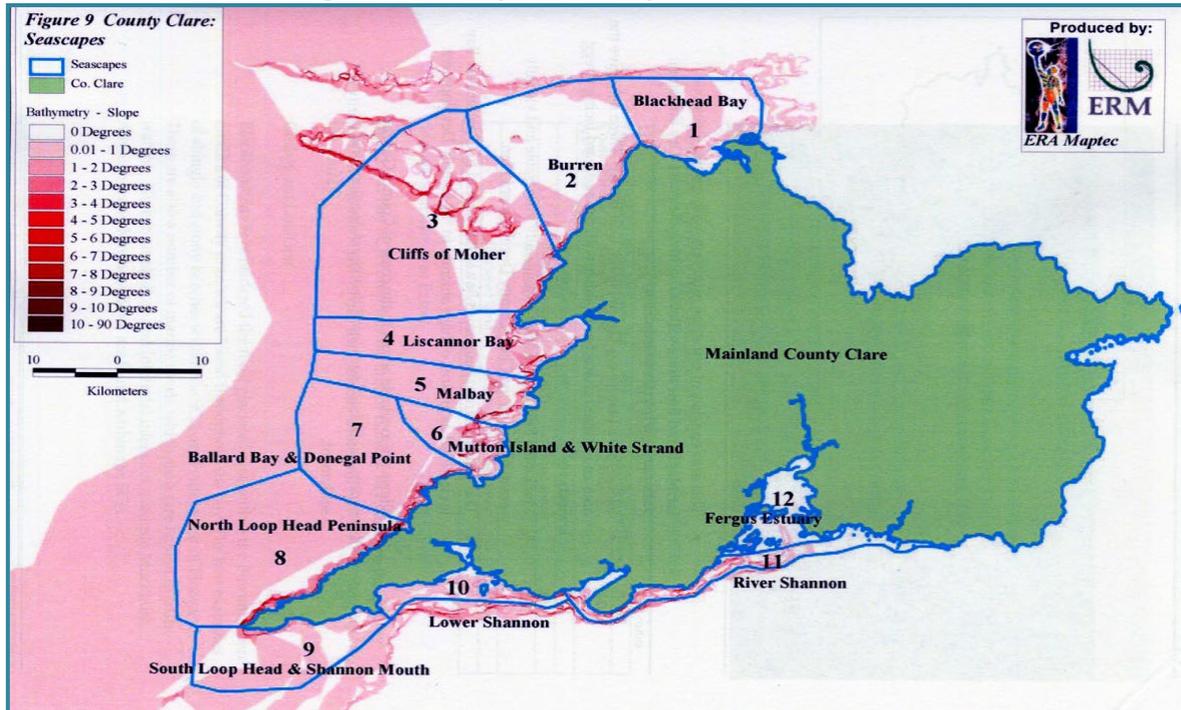
14.4 Seascape Character Areas

The length of the County Clare coastline totals some 344km of which approximately 317 km is on the mainland of the County with the remaining 27km of coastline on the islands within the County. Seascapes are areas of sea, coastline and land, as perceived by people, the character of which results from the actions and interactions of land with sea through natural and/or human factors. The seascapes of County Clare are a crucial element of the County's history, identity and culture. The Regional Seascape Character Assessment for Ireland 2020 has been prepared as part of the National Marine Planning Framework. This identifies the following 3 Regional Seascape Character Areas in County Clare:

- Atlantic Galway Bay and Islands;
- Atlantic Clare Cliffs; and
- Shannon Estuary and Tralee Bay.

In addition to the above Regional Seascape Character Areas, a Seascape Character Assessment of County Clare was carried out by the Heritage Council in 2002 as part of the County Landscape Character Assessment. This Seascape Character Assessment identified 12 individual Character Areas in County Clare (Figure 14.3) and each of these areas has unique scenic, geology, history and sensitivities.

Figure 14.3 Map of Seascape Character Areas



Source: *Environmental Resources Management (2003)*

**Development Plan Objective:
Seascape Character Areas**

CDP14.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To require that it be demonstrated that every effort has been made to visually integrate any proposed development within a Seascape Character area. This must be demonstrated by assessing the proposal in relation to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Views from land to sea; • Views from sea to land; • Views along the coastline. <p>b) To ensure that appropriate standards of location, siting, design, finishing and landscaping are achieved.</p>
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14.5 Views and Prospects

County Clare contains a number of valuable views and prospects which offer a very attractive cross-sectional view and overall impression of differing landscapes as one traverses the County. These views and prospects, many of which are located along identified scenic routes, are interwoven with the settled, working and heritage landscapes outlined above. The Council recognises that in some areas the land adjoining these scenic routes has relatively limited capacity (both environmentally and in terms of scenic amenity) to accommodate individual houses in significant numbers. In such areas, the Council will aim to protect sensitive areas

from injurious development, while providing for development and change that will benefit the rural community.

There is a need to protect and conserve views adjoining public roads throughout the County where these views are of high amenity value. In conserving views, it is not proposed that this should give rise to the prohibition of development along these routes but development, where permitted, should not seriously hinder or obstruct these views and should be designed and located to minimise their visual impact.

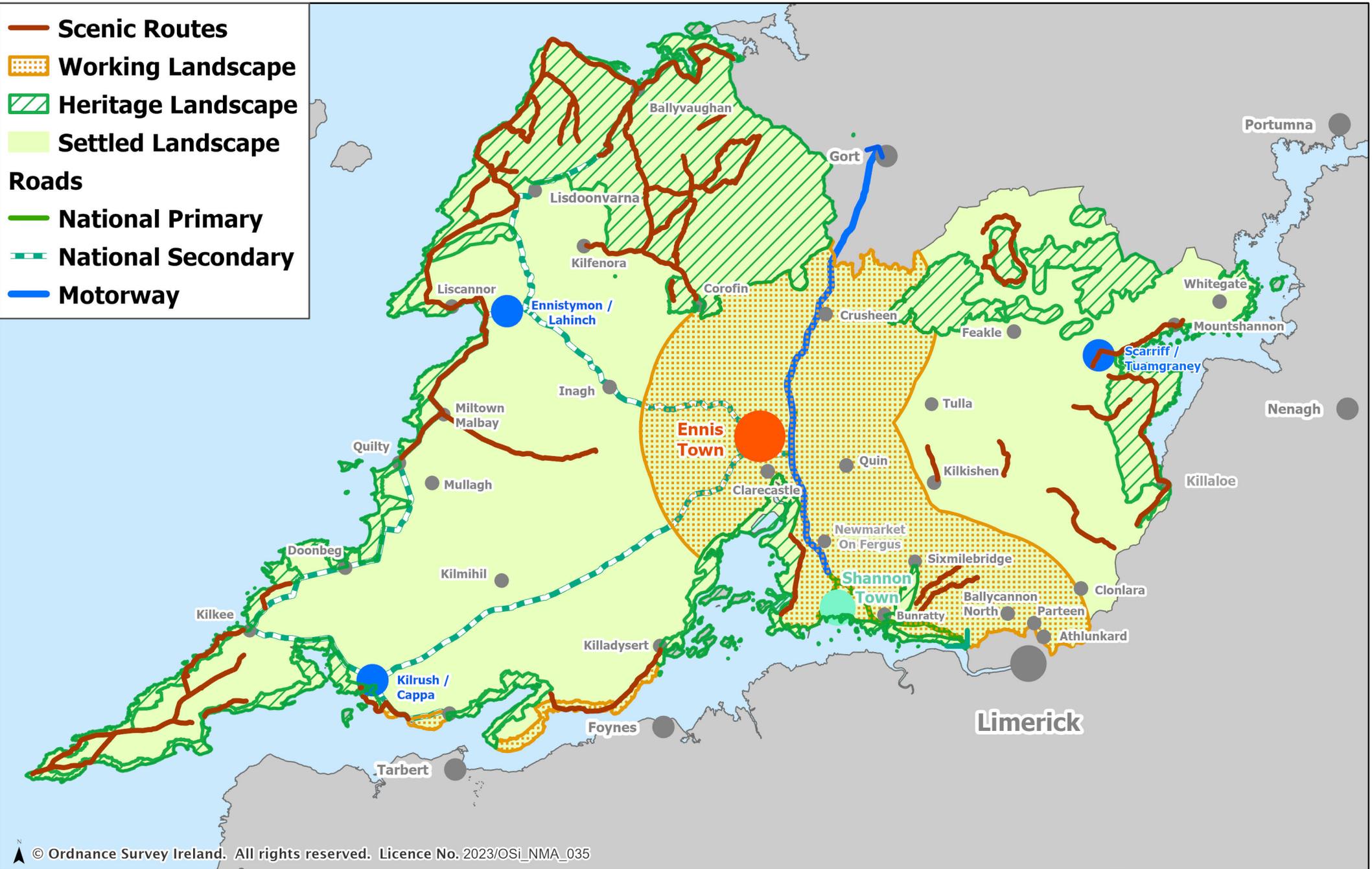
Designated Scenic Routes throughout the County are identified in more detail on the maps contained in Volume 2 of this Plan. They are also indicated on Map 14A in this Chapter and listed in Appendix 5.

The Wild Atlantic Way follows the west coast of County Clare, from Killimer on the Shannon Estuary to New Quay in North Clare. A series of seventeen Discovery Points and Signature Discovery Points have been identified encompassing the most scenic and high-amenity areas along the route. In order to maximise the potential of the Wild Atlantic Way, important views and prospects from the route will be preserved. The Council will work with Fáilte Ireland to ensure the sustainable development of viewing points along the route.

Development Plan Objective: Scenic Routes	
CDP14.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To protect sensitive areas from inappropriate development while providing for development and change that will benefit the rural community; b) To ensure that proposed developments take into consideration their effects on views from the public road towards scenic features or areas and are designed and located to minimise their impact; and c) To ensure that appropriate standards of location, siting, design, finishing and landscaping are achieved.

14.6 Applications for Single Houses in the Countryside

Planning applications for single houses in the countryside in areas that are designated as Heritage Landscapes or are accessed off Scenic Routes must also comply with objective CDP4.14 of this Plan.



Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029

Map 14A Landscape Designations

Chapter 15 Biodiversity, Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure

Goal XV: A county that protects and enhances its unique natural heritage and biodiversity and recognises the potential for sustainable green infrastructure development, while promoting and developing its cultural, educational and eco-tourism potential in a sustainable manner.

Chapter 15 Table of Contents

15.0	Introduction
15.1	Strategic Aims
15.2	Natural Heritage and Biodiversity
15.2.1	Biodiversity and Climate Change
15.2.2	European Sites
15.2.3	Appropriate Assessment
15.2.4	Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)
15.2.5	County Geological Sites
15.2.6	Other Sites for Environmental and Ecological Protection
15.2.7	Non-designated Sites and Biodiversity
15.2.8	Environmental Impact Assessment
15.2.9	Contaminated Lands
15.2.10	Promoting and Protecting Biodiversity and Wildlife Corridors
15.2.11	Urban Ecology
15.2.12	Habitat Fragmentation
15.2.13	Biodiversity on Local Authority Lands
15.2.14	Inland Waters, River Corridors and Riparian Zones
15.2.15	Freshwater Pearl Mussels
15.2.16	Peatlands
15.2.17	Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows
15.2.18	Grasslands
15.2.19	Wetlands
15.2.20	The Burren
15.2.20.1	The Burren National Park
15.2.20.2	Limestone Habitats
15.2.20.3	Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark
15.2.21	UNESCO World Heritage Site
15.2.22	Dark Sky Reserves
15.2.23	Alien and Invasive Species
15.3	Green Infrastructure and Climate Change

15.0 Introduction

County Clare has a wealth of natural heritage and biodiversity of local, national and international importance and the Council has an important role in the protection of this heritage and the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment. Biodiversity forms the basis of our landscapes and amenity areas, provides for food and clean water supplies, opportunities for waste disposal, nutrient recycling, coastal protection, and flood storage and attenuation. Green Infrastructure refers to the integration of walking, cycling and recreation with biodiversity, creating interconnected networks of land and water that sustain environmental quality and enrich our quality of life.

Ever increasing demands of people for food, fuel, space and other resources is threatening biodiversity. In addition, climate change increases pressure on habitats and species and in recognition of these related issues a Climate and Biodiversity Emergency was declared in the Dáil Éireann in 2019. The protection of biodiversity is necessary to regulate climate and provide ecosystem services including clean air and water, healthy soils, food supplies and medicines. Also, where sustainably managed, natural heritage and biodiversity can have economic and social benefits such as job creation, improvements to quality of life and the promotion of pride of place. Clare County Council has an important role to play in the protection and management of biodiversity and in addressing climate adaptation and mitigation.

Both the NPF and the RSES require that Green Infrastructure is integrated into land use planning and the achievement of net gains to the existing green infrastructure networks. Green infrastructure provides ecosystem services and provides quality of life benefits to people and planning for green infrastructure is included in the development objectives and land use zonings as set out in this Plan.

This Chapter outlines how the Council will meet its statutory environmental protection and conservation obligations whilst also outlining how the diverse natural heritage of County Clare can be sustainably utilised to create opportunities for active living, recreation, education and enhanced wellbeing and quality of life through the creation of an extensive green infrastructure network.

15.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives required to promote County Clare as an environmentally sustainable County and to support the natural heritage of the County through the conservation, protection and enhancement of its natural resources. In accordance with the overall Vision of the Plan it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To conserve and protect sites which have been designated for their ecological or environmental sensitivity;
- To ensure the sustainable management and conservation of areas of natural and geological heritage within the County;

- To increase education about and awareness of our natural heritage and biodiversity;
- To promote sustainable development, in harmony with local biodiversity and, if possible, take steps to enhance the natural environment;
- To ensure compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and Birds Directive; and
- To promote the creation of an integrated and coherent green infrastructure network throughout County Clare in order to enhance connectivity, social inclusion, sense of place and the creation of wildlife corridors.

15.2 Natural Heritage and Biodiversity

County Clare, with its coastal location hosts a wide diversity of wildlife and habitats and this natural heritage requires effective management in order to balance the need for development with the protection of the natural environment.

15.2.1 Biodiversity and Climate Change

Biodiversity refers to species, habitats and genetic diversity. It includes all plants and animals (including humans), fungi, algae and all other microscopic life forms, as well as their habitats and their interaction with other species within that habitat. A habitat is the environment(s) in which plant or animal species normally live or occur and examples include woodland, freshwater or coastal habitats. Biodiversity provides us with food, clean water, fuel and medicines, as well as underpinning our agricultural sector and providing a unique landscape which drives our tourism sector. It also provides opportunities such as waste disposal, nutrient recycling, coastal protection, flood storage and regulation and therefore a wide range of economic and social benefits and services result from the protection of environmental quality and biodiversity.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service (IPBES) has published its global assessment on the state of the world's biodiversity and ecosystem services. Ireland officially declared a climate and biodiversity emergency on May 9th 2019, becoming the second country after the UK to do so.

The report shows that nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history and the rate of species extinction is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely. The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our and future generation's economies, livelihoods, food security, health, and quality of life worldwide.

Current negative trends in biodiversity and ecosystems are undermining progress towards achieving 80% of the assessed targets of the Sustainable Development Goals, related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans, and land. Loss of biodiversity is shown to be not only an environmental issue, but also a developmental, economic, security, social and moral issue as well.

The Report also stresses that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global. The report concludes that “Through transformative change, nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably – this is also key to meeting most other global goals. By transformative change, the report means a fundamental, system-wide reorganisation across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values.”

Ireland’s 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) will be published in 2023 which will take account of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) actions and strategies as adopted at COP 15 in Montréal. This will form the national strategy for tackling biodiversity loss from which the Clare Biodiversity Plan will take its lead. The key targets as set out in the GBF will be translated at a national level which can subsequently be applied at a local level. It is premature to include county specific targets in the absence of a published national strategy and associated action plan at present however, once the new NBAP is published the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan can incorporate the translated key targets at a national level to the local county level. The development of the plan follows increased resourcing to the National Parks and Wildlife Services with a 64% budget increase since 2020 and an independent review of the NPWS published in May 2022, leading to a fully-funded strategic action plan to transform the organisation and better enable it to deliver positive outcomes for nature.

Threats to Biodiversity

Biodiversity is undergoing major decline worldwide, to the extent that scientists refer to this age as the ‘sixth mass extinction’. Causes of biodiversity loss include habitat loss, climate change, pollution, pesticide/herbicide usage and the spread of invasive species. Many of these issues are related to increased industrialisation and intensification of agriculture.

A growing number of studies indicate that human-induced stressors such as habitat loss and fragmentation, pollution and climate change are seriously reducing the abundance, diversity and biomass of insects and other invertebrate on a global scale. The exact mechanism of such declines is poorly understood, but there is a strong scientific consensus that the decline of insects (and other invertebrates) is a very real and serious threat to ecosystems and to humanity. Therefore, we must act urgently to address this decline. Recently, a consortium of international scientists proposed a global ‘roadmap’ for insect recovery, which entails the immediate implementation of several ‘no regret’ measures to help slow or stop insect declines, such as habitat protection and creation, phasing out pesticide use and reducing light, water and noise pollution.

While there is an emphasis on nature-based solutions as a response to climate change, the modification of any existing habitats that maintain ecological functions should generally be avoided. Retention of existing habitats is a priority. The creation of new habitats should only take place after detailed ecological assessment which would establish the nature of existing habitats to minimise the chances of ecological damage.

Clare County Council has prepared a Biodiversity Manual to guide the application of best practice with regard to biodiversity and habitat protection by the Council and will also implement the County Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and the County Clare Biodiversity Plan 2017-2023.



Developments which are inappropriately located or designed have the potential to cause habitat fragmentation and have negative impacts on biodiversity and climate change. Examples of such developments include new roads dividing habitats or hedgerow clearance in bat commuting areas. Biodiversity has the potential to enhance development settings rather than posing obstacles to developments and where biodiversity is appropriately considered the potential for adverse impacts can be avoided or minimised.

The inclusion of buffer zones between developments and biodiversity sites or areas of natural heritage importance may be required for a variety of reasons including the protection of biodiversity, flood alleviation and the management of nutrient and silt loading, In the identification of buffer zones for the protection of biodiversity in the plan area the following criteria should be taken into consideration:

- Areas that are practicable and appropriate to manage;
- Buffer characteristics (e.g. slope, soil type);
- Conservation value of the feature to be protected;
- Intensity of adjacent land use(s);
- Local wildlife corridors and species connectivity;
- Proximity to existing development and lands zoned for development;
- Specific buffer function; and
- Tolerance of the species and habitat to disturbance.



**Development Plan Objective:
Biodiversity**

CDP15.1

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To implement the National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021, the All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025, the EU A Farm to Fork Strategy 2020, the County Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and the County Clare Biodiversity Plan 2017-2023, or any subsequent plans, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders;
- b) To review the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and to prepare a new plan, which will be set within the context of the National Heritage Plan "Heritage Ireland 2030", upon the expiry of the existing adopted Plan;
- c) To support National Biodiversity Week and events such as Bioblitz in order to increase awareness of biodiversity and its benefits to the community;
- d) To ensure that features of importance to local biodiversity are retained as part of developments and projects being undertaken in the County;
- e) To identify ecological buffer zones, where appropriate, in the Plan area; and
- f) To support current and future projects with the aim of restoration/rehabilitation of natural habitats and species.

Development Plan Objective: Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Built Heritage Assets	
CDP15.2	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support initiatives that enhance and protect County Clare's unique natural heritage, biodiversity and built heritage assets, recognising the contribution which education and outreach can play in developing understanding of biodiversity and heritage in our communities. Such initiatives should secure funding to support projects in the region in line with the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

15.2.2 European Sites

The EU Habitats and Birds Directives provide for the conservation, protection and, in some cases, restoration of habitats and species (plants and animals) of European importance which may be rare, threatened or in danger of disappearance in the EU (as listed in various annexes of the Directives). The Directives also seek to establish 'Natura 2000' sites, which form a network of protected areas throughout Europe. These protected areas include:

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) - These sites are for the conservation and protection of plants, animals (other than birds) and wildlife habitats that are of importance to the EU. The sites are designated for habitats and species listed in Annex I and Annex II of the EU Habitats Directive (1992) respectively.

Special Protection Area (SPAs) – These sites are for the conservation and protection of birds and their habitats designated under the EU Birds Directive 2009 (first adopted by Member States in 1979), which was implemented in Ireland through the Conservation of Wild Birds Regulations (Statutory Instrument 291 of 1985). These sites are for the protection and conservation of rare and threatened bird species and their habitats.

As a competent authority the Council shall in the performance of its functions, take appropriate steps to avoid the deterioration of natural habitats and the habitats of species within these 'Natura 2000' sites, as well as the disturbance of the species for which the site has been designated, insofar as such disturbance could be significant in relation to the objectives of the Habitats Directive. In addition, the Council has duties as a public authority under Regulation 27 of the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 relating to nature conservation.

Development Plan Objective: European Sites	
CDP15.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To afford the highest level of protection to all designated European sites in accordance with the relevant Directives and legislation on such matters;</p> <p>b) To require all planning applications for development that may have (or cannot rule out) likely significant effects on European Sites in view of the site’s Conservation Objectives, either in isolation or in combination with other plans or projects, to submit a Natura Impact Statement in accordance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended); and</p> <p>c) To recognise and afford appropriate protection to any new or modified SPAs or SACs that are identified during the lifetime of this Development Plan through the planning application process bearing in mind proposals for development outside of a European site may also have an indirect effect.</p>

15.2.3 Appropriate Assessment

It is a requirement that future developments must not have or perpetuate adverse effects on the conservation objectives and/or integrity of a European site. The conservation objectives for some protected sites require not just the maintenance of favourable conservation condition but also the restoration of favourable conservation condition of the qualifying interests.

In accordance with the Birds and Habitats Regulations 2011, any plan or project which is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site, must be screened by the Council for appropriate assessment to establish if there is potential for significant effects on such sites and to determine if an appropriate assessment is required. Having considered the conclusions of the Natura Impact Report (for plans) or Natura Impact Statement (for projects), the competent national authorities shall agree to the plan or project if they are satisfied that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site(s) concerned.

In the instance where a Natura Impact Report/Statement indicates that there is an adverse effect on the integrity of a site (and in the absence of alternative solutions), in line with Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive the plan or project can only proceed if there are ‘Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest’ (IROPI), including those of a social or economic nature. In such cases, the Member State is required to take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the ‘Natura 2000’ network is protected. It shall also inform the European Commission of the compensatory measures adopted and await the opinion of the Commission regarding the proposed plan or project. Any such project or plan which is identified as having adverse effects on the integrity of a European site and has made

the case for IROPI should be guided by the European Commission’s guidance on the application of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive¹.

Development Plan Objective: Requirement for Appropriate Assessment	
CDP15.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To implement Article 6(3) and where necessary 6(4) of the Habitats Directive and to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out in relation to works, plans and projects likely to impact on European sites (SACs and SPAs), whether directly or indirectly or in combination with any other plan(s) or project(s); and</p> <p>b) To have regard to Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009 or any updated version.</p>

15.2.4 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)

Natural Heritage Areas are designated sites of national importance for habitats and species in Ireland. NHA’s are established under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, but are conserved and protected under the Wildlife Acts, 1976-2000. A list of Natural Heritage Areas in County Clare is contained in Appendix A3 of this Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)	
CDP15.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To actively promote the conservation and protection of areas designated as NHA's (including proposed sites) and to only consider proposals for development within or affecting an NHA where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposed development will not have a significant adverse effect on the NHA or pNHA; and</p> <p>b) To identify and afford appropriate protection to any new, proposed or modified NHA's identified during the lifetime of the Development Plan;</p>

15.2.5 County Geological Sites

There are areas in County Clare that are of national geological importance in terms of being best representative examples of particular formations or features. The diversity of these

¹

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/guidance_art6_4_en.pdf

features is set out in ‘Banner Rocks – The Geological Heritage of County Clare’ (2014) publication. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) has identified some of the most important County Geological Sites as part of their Irish Geological Heritage Programme and a list of these sites is included in Appendix A3.

Development Plan Objective: County Geological Sites	
CDP15.6	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <p>a) To recognise the importance of Geological Heritage Sites and to conserve, manage and where possible to enhance the character and integrity of these sites and to promote increased understanding and awareness of the natural heritage of the County; and</p> <p>b) To promote and facilitate the development of geo-tourism in County Clare in accordance with Development Plan Objectives CDP15.3 and CDP15.4.</p>

15.2.6 Other Sites for Environmental and Ecological Protection

There are a number of other sites in the County such as the Burren National Park, nature reserves and wildfowl sanctuaries (listed in Appendix A3) that are designated for environmental and/or ecological protection reasons. These designations are required to ensure the protection and conservation of flora and fauna and for the significant amenity and educational resource value of the sites.

Development Plan Objective: Burren National Park, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Nature Reserves	
CDP15.7	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To protect the Burren National Park, all wildlife sanctuaries, nature reserves and all species (including Annex I habitats and birds and Annex II species) designated under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2000 and EC (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011;</p> <p>b) To ensure that the amenities of the Burren National Park, wildlife sanctuaries and nature reserves are protected and that their educational values are enhanced and promoted; and</p> <p>c) To work with local communities, landowners, the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other relevant parties to protect, manage where appropriate, enhance and promote sites of ecological importance across the County in accordance with Development Plan Objectives CDP15.3 and CDP15.4.</p>

15.2.7 Non-designated Sites and Biodiversity

County Clare has many important biodiversity sites which are not designated as European sites or (p)NHA but their ecological value is of high importance as they host important plant and animal species or their habitats (including Annex I habitats, Annex I birds and Annex II and IV species). The Council has carried out detailed field-by-field habitat mapping for almost half of the County, creating an important record of local biodiversity. During the lifetime of this Plan the Council will aim to complete the mapping in the remaining areas, namely North Clare (excluding The Burren area), West Clare and the Slieve Aughty area.

The All Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 (AIPP) is a strategy to address the dramatic insect declines across Europe and in Ireland. This is a shared plan of action to create an Ireland where pollinators can survive and thrive. Clare County Council signed up as partners to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan in February 2020. The AIPP recognises that councils play a leading role in making their land more pollinator friendly and inspiring others to also take action. As a signatory to the plan, Clare County Council is committed to implementing the 30 actions listed in ‘Councils: actions to help pollinators’ guidance document and to promote the implementation of the plan in all its operations.

The Council will encourage new infrastructure projects to demonstrate a high degree of permeability for wildlife, to allow the movement of species and to prevent the creation of barriers to wildlife and aquatic life in the wider countryside.

Development Plan Objective: Non-Designated Sites and Biodiversity	
CDP15.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological networks/corridors of biodiversity value outside of designated sites throughout the County and to require an ecological assessment to accompany development proposals likely to impact on such areas or species; b) To ensure that available habitat mapping is taken into consideration in any ecological assessment undertaken; c) To complete the Habitat Mapping of the County (in accordance with A Guide to Habitats in Ireland - The Heritage Council 2000) in order to identify and record the natural habitats of the County at a detailed level and afford appropriate protection to areas of importance as required; and d) To implement and monitor the actions as set out in the Clare Biodiversity Action Plan and the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

Development Plan Objective: Natural Heritage and Infrastructure Schemes	
CDP 15.9	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To be responsive to environmental challenges and to ensure the protection of natural heritage when considering proposed service infrastructure and proposed road works (both realignments and new roads) located in, in close proximity to, or nearby protected species or sites of importance in terms of biodiversity.

15.2.8 Environmental Impact Assessment

Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is a process that provides for the evaluation of the full environmental consequences and impacts of development actions in a systematic, holistic and multidisciplinary way and is a critical tool in managing and clarifying the complex inter-relationships between development and the environment. Environmental assessments consider alternative development proposals, assess the impacts of these alternatives, propose measures to avoid, mitigate against or compensate for adverse impacts and in each case lead to the production of an Environmental Impact Assessment Report. This report is submitted with a planning application or, if deemed necessary, may be requested after an application has been submitted. The requirement for EIA is set out in Part X of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

Development Plan Objective: Environmental Impact Assessment	
CDP15.10	It is an objective of the Development Plan: a) To implement the EIA Directive, ensuring that all elements/stages or components of the project are included in one overall assessment and all reasonable alternatives are taken into consideration in choosing the option with the least environmental impact; b) To have regard to “Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessments (2018) when considering proposals for which an EIA is required; and c) To ensure full compliance with the requirements of the EU Habitats Directive, SEA Directive and associated legislation/regulations, including the associated European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011 (S.I. No. 477 of 2011), European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) regulations 2004-2011, and the European Communities (Environmental Impact Assessment)

	Regulations 1989 – 2011 (or any updated/superseding legislation).
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15.2.9 Contaminated Lands

The Environmental Protection Agency state that ‘contaminants’ are substances that are in, on or under the land and that have the potential to adversely affect health or to cause pollution of the wider environment and that ‘contaminated land’ is any land that is impacted by contamination.

Development Plan Objective: Brownfield Site Regeneration and Contaminated Land	
CDP15.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To ensure that, prior to the redevelopment of a site previously known to include an operation with the potential for high environmental impact such as petrol stations, gasworks, landfills or coal yards, due diligence is carried out on the site to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the ecological aspects of soil and groundwater contamination; • Prepare a site risk assessment and where deemed necessary a waste plan and a site aftercare and remedial action plan; and <p>b) Ensure that contaminated soil is disposed of in accordance with the Waste Management Regulations (S.I.821 of 2007)</p>

15.2.10 Promoting and Protecting Biodiversity and Wildlife Corridors

Wildlife and biodiversity is not confined to statutorily designated sites but rather is dispersed throughout County Clare’s urban and rural areas and beyond. The promotion of biodiversity has become increasingly important over recent years and the protection of wildlife corridors and stepping stones (including those covered by Article 10 of the Habitats Directive) are of particular importance. These areas assist the movement of wildlife from one area to another for breeding, hibernation, in search of food etc and are also essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

There are a large number of Lesser Horseshoe Bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) and other bat sites throughout County Clare. All bat species and their breeding and resting places (roosts) are legally protected in Ireland under the Wildlife Acts 1976-2012. It is particularly critical that wildlife corridors, tree lines, hedgerows and other landscape features within the vicinity of a known bat roost are retained to allow for the free movement of these bats and other species within and through the surrounding area.

Development Plan Objective: Biodiversity and Habitat Protection	
CDP15.12	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the County both within protected areas and in the general landscape through the promotion of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats, the enhancement of new and existing habitats, and through the integration of Green Infrastructure (GI), Blue Infrastructure and ecosystem services including landscape, heritage, biodiversity and management of invasive and alien species into the Development Plan; b) To promote the conservation of biodiversity through the protection of sites of biodiversity importance and wildlife corridors, both within and between the designated sites and the wider Plan area; c) To support the implementation of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan, National Biodiversity Action Plan and National Raised Bog SAC Management Plan; d) To ensure there is no net loss of potential Lesser Horseshoe Bat feeding habitats, treelines and hedgerows within 2.5km of known roosts; e) To implement and monitor the actions as set out in the Clare County Biodiversity Plan; and f) To promote biodiversity net gain in any new plans/projects/policies to promote development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before.

15.2.11 Urban Ecology

Cities, towns and villages are often located near biodiversity hotspots such as rivers, wetlands, flood plains and the coast. Urban areas have habitats such as parks and water features which support wildlife and the capacity of these areas to support bio-diversity can be enhanced through improved wildlife-friendly management. Private gardens and buildings can also play an important role in supporting biodiversity and providing important habitats and wildlife corridors in urban areas whilst also improving the public realm and quality of life.

Development Plan Objective: Urban Ecology	
CDP15.13	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To encourage and, where appropriate, enhance the provision of biodiversity features in urban areas through the preparation of local areas plans/settlement plans, green

	<p>infrastructure strategies, ecosystem services, and through the development management process;</p> <p>b) To support investment in the on-going maintenance and enhancement of facilities in existing green infrastructure and to support the provision of new public, parks, green space corridors and other public open spaces in tandem with projected population growth to create green, healthy settlements throughout the County;</p> <p>c) To ensure that plans for new public parks and associated facilities are informed by environmental assessment and green infrastructure objectives;</p> <p>d) To ensure that any new lighting proposals and upgrades to existing lighting infrastructure are designed in a manner which considers any sensitive species within the area, such as bats and their roosts; and</p> <p>e) To encourage (where appropriate) swift nesting areas in new or retrofitted urban buildings and to protect existing nesting locations.</p>
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15.2.12 Habitat Fragmentation

Development and infrastructure requirements such as new roads and large industrial, retail and residential developments have had negative impacts on biodiversity through a loss of species and the fragmentation of habitats, commuting corridors and green infrastructure networks. To ensure that existing habitats are maintained, existing natural features such as hedgerows must be incorporated into development proposals and only where the loss of such features is unavoidable will compensatory provision be considered as a response. Where fragmentation has already taken place, works to remediate and enhance the connectivity and integrity of the disturbed habitats must be implemented.

Development Plan Objective: Habitat Fragmentation and Green Infrastructure Corridors	
CDP15.14	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>(a) To ensure that development proposals support and enhance the connectivity and integrity of habitats in the Plan area by incorporating natural features into the design of development proposals.</p> <p>(b) To ensure that the potential impacts upon the migratory routes of fauna including birds and bats and the movement of species between European Sites are fully considered within the relevant ecological assessment. These assessments shall fully consider flight collision risks, habitat fragmentation and barrier risk as required.</p>

15.2.13 Biodiversity on Local Authority Lands

Clare County Council owns and manages lands throughout the County and these lands include public parks, walkways, areas which are designated for the protection of biodiversity and other areas which have biodiversity value. A number of these sites are specifically managed for nature conservation and the Council is seeking to improve its approach in this regard through the application of best practice in relation to biodiversity and habitat protection and the implementation of the objectives and guidance as set out in the County Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023, the County Clare Biodiversity Plan 2017-2023, the Biodiversity Manual and other plans such as the Pollinator Plan and the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

Biodiversity Demonstration Sites

In 2020 Clare County Council completed a ‘Biodiversity Demonstration Sites’ project 2020 from funding received from the Heritage Council, and the National Biodiversity Action Plan. This resulted in area based, tangible demonstration of best practice in the management of public land for the benefit of biodiversity and nature conservation, involving all the relevant stakeholders. The following ten sites were chosen and surveyed, with species lists compiled and final reports and recommendations on their management distributed to the relevant stakeholders:

Tim Smythe Park, Ennis	Shannon Wetland, Shannon
Green Area - Cooraclare Road, Kilrush	Two Mile Gate, Ballycuggaran, Killaloe
Public Park - Miltown Malbay	Liscannor Road Junction, Lahinch
Ennistymon to Lahinch Road	Ennistymon Picnic Area – Lahinch Road
Riverside Park, Scarriff,	Ballycannon Graveyard, Meelick.

Development Plan Objective:

Biodiversity on Local Authority Lands

CDP15.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To support the implementation of positive conservation management on lands which are owned or managed by Clare County Council; b) To protect and where possible enhance the biodiversity value of land owned and managed by Clare County Council; c) To support national policy to create new woodlands on public land and participate in the Creation of Woodlands on Public Lands Scheme and any subsequent schemes subject to the appropriate ecological assessments; d) To create new native woodlands on public lands which will be carried out in accordance with proper planning and sustainable development in order to ensure important habitats such as Wetlands (which are key carbon
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	<p>sequestration locations) are not lost due to their development; and</p> <p>e) To support the use of natural approaches to flood management and control on lands owned or managed by or on behalf of Clare County Council subject to the appropriate ecological assessments.</p>
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15.2.14 Inland Waters, River Corridors and Riparian Zones

There is a multiplicity of surface water systems located around the County, many of which have been designated as protected sites for their unique flora and fauna and are of national and international repute. Management of river corridors and riparian zones is vitally important, not just from an ecological perspective, but also from a practical and amenity standpoint.

Our rivers, lands and groundwater features such as turloughs are abundant with biodiversity and act as important conduits for the movement of both flora and fauna. Alterations or physical interventions to these water bodies such as culverting, vegetation removal and inclusion of waterside walking/cycling paths can have negative impacts on established ecosystems, species and the natural habitat, as well as diminishing the quality of the environment for human beings.

Riparian buffers are vegetated areas near water bodies which help to shade and partially protect the water body from the impact of adjacent land uses. They play a key role in protecting/improving water quality and are important linear features in the landscape which are essential for connectivity.

Inland Fisheries Ireland has issued guidance relating to managing development in the riparian zone entitled 'Planning For Watercourses In The Urban Environment - A Guide to the Protection of Watercourses through the use of Buffer Zones - Sustainable Drainage Systems, Instream Rehabilitation, Climate / Flood Risk and Recreational Planning'. The Shannon Regional Fisheries Board has also issued a guidance document entitled 'Development and Management of the Riparian Zone' which outlines an integrated watercourse protection strategy. A key requirement of this integrated watercourse protection strategy is the set-aside of sufficient land space along the river margin or corridor. The recommended width for larger river channels (>10m) is 35m to 60m and for smaller channels (<10m) is 20m or greater. The determined width should be tailored to site specific, river reach or lakeshore characteristics and their associated habitats. It is important that the buffer zone is large enough to protect the ecological integrity of the river (including emergent vegetation), the riparian zone (bank-side vegetation including trees) and takes into account the human history of the area.



**Development Plan Objective:
Inland Waterways and River Corridors**

CDP15.16

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to protect from degradation and damage and manage inland waters, river corridors and their floodplains, turloughs, lakes, fens and other water bodies, and to recognise and promote them as natural assets and key elements in the green infrastructure network in the County;
- b) To protect riparian areas, where appropriate, in the Plan area;
- c) To ensure that, where development occurs within a riparian zone, it does not have a negative impact on associated habitats and species and to have regard for Inland Fisheries Ireland guidance 'Planning For Watercourses In The Urban Environment' and any updated versions;
- d) To work with all relevant stakeholders to protect and improve appropriate access to waterways and river corridors whilst ensuring their conservation and the protection of the resource and water quality;
- e) To encourage development proposals to
 - I. Maintain an appropriate width for the riparian zone to be protected;
 - II. Improve appropriate access and compatible leisure activities;

	<p>III. Maintain and enhance the fishing potential for both local interests and tourism by protecting the natural spawning beds of trout and salmon; and</p> <p>f) To protect the County’s valuable inland fishery resource and support its sustainable development through the protection of water quality and facilitation of ancillary infrastructure at appropriate locations.</p>
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15.2.15 Freshwater Pearl Mussels

The freshwater pearl mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* is an extremely sensitive species that can be damaged in a number of ways including by the removal of river boulders and gravels, building works such as bridges, weirs or bank reinforcements, land intensification, forestry activities, individual housing, removal of peat and particularly upgraded sheds or housing for animals and the subsequent slurry spreading. Such activities have the potential to exert a high level of pressure on the species and its catchment. This species is included on the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources Red List of Threatened Species and is rated as ‘critically endangered’ throughout Ireland.

In County Clare there is one Special Area of Conservation (SAC) with a freshwater pearl mussel population for which the river catchment is protected. This is the Cloon River system. This is located on the north shore of the Shannon Estuary and feeds into the Estuary in Clonderalaw Bay at its downstream end. Unfortunately, the freshwater pearl mussel population in the Cloon is currently at unfavourable conservation status. It is currently ranked as 15th out of the 27 Freshwater Pearl Mussel SAC populations in the Country based on population status, habitat condition and current pressures. There is an absence of juveniles and a rarity of small mussels throughout the Cloon where suitable habitat is found. The population is failing due to the deterioration in habitat quality which is evident from the high levels of siltation and macrophyte growth.

In recent years, climate change is having a serious effect on the catchment. The impacts of low flows have reached crisis level, with the in-combination effects of uneven precipitation levels and ongoing catchment drainage.

County Clare contains the following three catchments which are identified as Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sensitive Areas by the National Parks & Wildlife Service:

- Doonbeg,
- Shannon – Graney/Scariff, and
- Shannon – Woodford.

Development Plan Objective: Freshwater Pearl Mussels	
CDP15.17	It is an objective of the Development Plan:

	<p>a) To have regard to the potential impacts of developments within or in close proximity to the Cloon River freshwater pearl mussel catchment including impacts arising downstream within the Shannon Estuary and Clonderlaw Bay;</p> <p>b) To have regard to the Cloon Freshwater Pearl Mussel Sub-Basin Management Plan in the assessment of planning applications;</p> <p>c) To ensure careful consideration is given to all proposed developments within the Doonbeg, Shannon – Graney/Scarriff and the Shannon – Woodford Freshwater Pearl Mussel sensitive areas; and</p> <p>d) To ensure full compliance with Objective CDP3.3 in relation to any future developments in close proximity to a freshwater pearl mussel catchment or sensitive area.</p>
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15.2.16 Peatlands

County Clare contains a number of blanket and raised bogs and many of these bogs are protected by both national and international designations (i.e. Natural Heritage Areas and/or Natura 2000 sites). The Council recognises the importance of peatlands as major natural, archaeological and non-renewable resources and also their critical function as natural carbon sinks. The potential appropriate utilisation of protected peatland areas for amenity, educational, research and tourism purposes is also recognised.

Development Plan Objective: Peatlands	
CDP15.18	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To protect and enhance the valuable peatland resource in County Clare including protecting the heritage and environmental value of these peatland areas.

15.2.17 Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

Woodland habitats in County Clare include oak, ash and hazel woodlands, wet woodlands, scrub and hedgerows. Small pockets of ancient woodland remain in the County such as at Mullaghmore in the Burren and in other small pockets throughout County Clare. Many of the woodlands of County Clare are protected areas for their habitat and amenity value, and these are listed in Appendix A3. The Council recognise the high amenity value of woodlands, their contribution to landscape diversity and habitat, and their carbon storage function.



Trees, forestry and hedgerows make a valuable contribution to the landscape, character and visual amenity of County Clare and also provide wider environmental benefits. They soften the public realm, provide scale to buildings, contribute to a sense of place, provide shelter, produce oxygen, act as noise, dust and pollutant filters, retain moisture and assist in flood prevention. They also provide habitats for many species and act as wildlife corridors for animals to move along for breeding and feeding. The Council will facilitate and encourage the replacement of trees and hedgerows where loss or breaches occur. Clare County Council have published some relevant guidance on trees suitable for local circumstances such as the Tree Design Guide for Towns and Villages in County Clare, Survey of Trees in Towns and Village of County Clare and The Buds of the Banner, A Guide to Growing Native Trees and Shrubs in Clare.

Development Plan Objective:

Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows

CDP15.19

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To preserve and conserve individual or groups of trees identified in Volume 2 of this Plan as 'Trees for Preservation' which will enhance the character and appearance of an area;
- b) To carry out tree survey work during the lifetime of this Plan to identify future trees of importance in the County and facilitate their future protection;
- c) To protect individual or groups of trees within the Plan area which are important for environmental, recreational, historical, biodiversity and/or aesthetic reasons or by reason of contribution to sense of place, including groups of trees which correspond with protected habitats, or which support protected species, under the Habitats Directive;

	<p>d) To work with landowners, local communities and other relevant groups to promote the retention and conservation of existing trees and hedgerows and encourage development proposals that enhance the landscape through positive management and additional planting/sensitive replanting of native tree species;</p> <p>e) To protect woodlands and hedgerows from damage and/or degradation and to prevent disruption of the connectivity of woodlands and hedgerows of the County;</p> <p>f) To ensure, where required, applications for development include proposals for planting / leave a suitable ecological buffer zone, between the development works and areas/features of ecological importance;</p> <p>g) Where hedgerows are required to be removed in the interests of traffic safety or where breaches to hedgerows occur due to river drainage/maintenance works and flood repair, to require the applicant/developer to reinstate the hedgerows with a suitable replacement of native species to the satisfaction of the Council;</p> <p>h) To require each green space in new residential developments to have at least one native oak tree, or other naturalised tree species of similar stature and lifespan, integrated into the agreed planting/landscaping scheme; and</p> <p>i) To require, where possible, that all trees felled as a result of development proposals be replaced at a minimum ratio of 10 new native species per 1 tree felled.</p>
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Development Plan Objective: Natural Resources & Climate Change	
CDP15.20	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To develop a strategy to undertake and implement an active native tree planting programme in suitable and appropriate locations in the context of climate adaptation in conjunction with an awareness campaign that informs communities of the benefits of tree planting;</p> <p>b) To ensure that adverse risks from climate change are considered in the assessment of development proposals and measures are employed to appropriately address these risks; and</p> <p>c) To ensure that any tree planting scheme is subject to appropriate ecological assessments and to ensure that areas selected for tree planting are suitable, will provide</p>

	enhancement and positive benefits for biodiversity and will not impact on European sites.
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15.2.18 Grasslands

Grasslands cover much of County Clare including wet grasslands and dry calcareous grasslands. Orchid rich dry calcareous grasslands are an internationally important habitat, supporting a high diversity of plants and animals, including insects. Wet grasslands support many plant and animal species and are also very important for many bird species.

Development Plan Objective: Grasslands	
CDP15.21	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To complete the habitat mapping of the County (in accordance with A Guide to Habitats in Ireland – (The Heritage Council) in order to identify and record the different grasslands of the County at a detailed level and to use the collected data to ensure that the necessary protection is afforded to areas of importance.

15.2.19 Wetlands

Wetlands include a wide range of habitats including watercourses, marshes, fens, bogs, turloughs, wet woodlands and estuaries. They support a variety of habitats and species, assist in the protection of water quality and flood control, contribute to climate resilience by functioning as carbon sinks, and provide open space and recreational opportunities. The County Clare Wetlands Survey (2008) identified 34 different wetland types in the County, covering an area of over 23,000 hectares. These wetlands are a significant resource for the County and the Council will work to manage, enhance and protect these wetlands throughout the lifetime of this Plan. National planning legislation requires that work or development involving the drainage or reclamation of a wetland greater than 0.1 hectares requires planning permission. For drainage or reclamation of wetlands greater than 2 hectares an Environmental Assessment is required.

Development Plan Objective: Wetlands	
CDP15.22	It is an objective of the Development Plan: To manage, enhance and protect the wetlands in County Clare having regard to the County Clare Wetlands Survey (2008), the map of Irish Wetlands (www.wetlandsurveyireland.com), the Irish Wetland Types – An Identification Guide and Field Survey Manual, EPA 2018, the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) and ‘Drainage and Reclamation of Wetlands –

	Draft Guidelines for Planning Authorities, 2011’ and any subsequent guidance documents.
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15.2.20 The Burren

The Burren is renowned for its unusual and diverse flora and for its rich archaeological and historical heritage. It is one of the most distinctive landscape regions in Ireland and its features include limestone pavements and terraced hills, and a dense network of caves, turloughs and disappearing streams. Its varied coastline which extends southwards to the Cliffs of Moher is one of the most dramatic coastlines in Ireland.

The Burren contains the remnants of over 6,000 years of human habitation and has been described as ‘one vast memorial to bygone cultures’. Today, it is home to villages, farmsteads and single rural houses and its culture is a vibrant mix of recent and ancient.

The Burren has been described as ‘an archaeological landscape fossilised in time’ and is considered one of the best-preserved agricultural landscapes in Europe. The region contains architectural remnants and settlement patterns from all of the significant archaeological periods in Western Europe and presents a tangible record of continuity between each period.

15.2.20.1 The Burren National Park

The Burren National Park, which was established in 1981, is located in the south-eastern corner of the Burren. It is managed as a Category II Protected Area, as defined by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), and it has the same international status as sites such as Yellowstone, Yosemite and the Great Barrier Reef national parks. The area of the park is currently 2,091 hectares but the ultimate goal is to expand the park to over 7,000 hectares.

Development Plan Objective: The Burren National Park	
CDP15.23	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>(a) To work with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and other key stakeholders to develop a plan for Corofin to realise the potential of the village as a gateway to the Burren. The Plan shall take into account the objectives within the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 and shall consider the conservation objectives of all relevant European sites, ensuring compliance with appropriate environmental assessments.</p> <p>(b) To protect the amenity of the Burren National Park, to encourage the expansion and development of the national</p>

park as a world-class area for conservation and visitors and to support sustainable visitor management at the park.

15.2.20.2 Limestone Habitats

The limestone landscape of the Burren and its associated orchid-rich grasslands are of international importance and are exclusive to County Clare and parts of South Galway. Issues for the protection of limestone pavements and associated plant and animal species include scrub encroachment, land reclamation for agriculture, new developments and the abandonment of land. In addition, water pollution and the alteration of hydrology in limestone areas can affect plant and animal species and their associated wetlands, turloughs, fens and lakes. Limestone caves provide an important habitat for bat species and some plant species and there is almost 100 kilometres of accessible cave passages in County Clare, most of which are in the Burren. The Council will continue to work to conserve the rare limestone habitats in the County.

Development Plan Objective: Limestone Habitats

CDP15.24

It is an objective of Clare County Council:
To encourage, support and promote farming for conservation in the Burren area in order to support the conservation of the limestone habitats in the area and to seek, on an on-going basis, new funding mechanisms for this work.

15.2.20.3 Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark

A Geopark is a unified area with geological heritage of international significance, which is used to promote awareness of key issues facing society in the context of the dynamic planet we all live on. The Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark is a designated UNESCO Global Geopark and forms part of both the UNESCO Global Geoparks Network and the European Geoparks Network. The Geopark supports greater interpretation of the geological landscape, climate change awareness and the achievement of sustainable tourism and land-use. It also works towards scientifically-sound and sustainable visitor management and monitoring practices at key natural sites and cultural monuments in the Burren. The Burren Ecotourism Network comprises businesses that adhere to the Geopark Code of Practice. This Code of Practice for Sustainable Tourism programme, which enables tourism businesses to monitor and improve their environmental impact, has received numerous awards including the 2018 Chamber Ireland Excellence in Local Government Award for Sustainable Tourism. Heritage trails are also being developed in collaboration with local communities and landowners in the area.

Development Plan Objective: Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark	
CDP15.25	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To continue to work in partnership with all relevant stakeholders to support the on-going work of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark and to secure the retention of the 'Geopark' status into the future; and b) To seek, on an on-going basis, new funding mechanisms for the work of the Geopark including from national and EU sources.

15.2.21 UNESCO World Heritage

The protection of the world's cultural and natural heritage is of high importance for present and future generations and, to this end, the State is committed to the identification, management, protection, conservation, presentation and transmission of its World Heritage Properties in accordance with Article 4 of the World Heritage Convention. A World Heritage Tentative List site is a proposed site that may (or may not) have potential Outstanding Universal Value, and a World Heritage Tentative Property is actually inscribed on the World Heritage List. The ultimate goal is inscription, and the Tentative List is only one step in the journey.

Development Plan Objective: World Heritage Status	
CDP15.26	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To collaborate with landowners, local communities and other relevant stakeholders to identify sites of global significance in County Clare that may be added to Ireland's World Heritage Tentative List*, and in due course achieve full world Heritage status by being inscribed onto the world Heritage List. b) To protect the attributes that convey the potential Outstanding Universal Value of sites that are included on Ireland's Tentative List. c) To protect the attributes that convey the Outstanding Universal Value of World Heritage Properties inscribed on the World Heritage List, and d) To engage with other national and international initiatives which promote the special built, natural and cultural heritage of places in the County. <p>*The Tentative List is an inventory of those sites which a country considers having potential Outstanding Universal</p>

	Value and intends to nominate for inscription onto the World Heritage List.
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In the event that sites in County Clare are included on Ireland’s Tentative List of inscribed on the World Heritage list, the following objective will apply when assessing proposals for development within the proposed and designated World Heritage areas/landscapes.

Development Plan Objective: Development Proposals in Designated World Heritage Properties	
CDP15.27	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To ensure that proposals for development in Tentative List Sites and their proposed buffer will be assessed having regard to the contribution of the development to the preservation, conservation, management and enhancement of the special qualities of these areas and their impact on the potential Outstanding Universal Value of the designated site.</p> <p>b) To ensure that proposals for development in World Heritage Properties and their buffer zones will be assessed having regard to the contribution of the development to the preservation, conservation, management, and enhancement of the special qualities of these areas and their impact on the Outstanding Universal Value of the designated property</p>

15.2.22 Dark Sky Reserves

Dark sky reserves are areas recognised as possessing an exceptional or distinguished quality of starry nights and nocturnal environment specifically protected for scientific, natural, educational, cultural, heritage or public enjoyment. International Dark Sky Reserves are designated by the International Dark Sky Association and Ireland has dark sky reserve designations in Kerry and Mayo. Dark sky reserves and parks offer rural communities sustainable tourism opportunities during out-of-season periods and are sanctuaries of tranquility for the public to enjoy the benefits of a natural night sky. There are a number of areas in County Clare that lend themselves to such a designation and the Council will explore the possibility of achieving the designation in locations in the County.

Development Plan Objective: Dark Sky Reserve Designations	
CDP15.28	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To identify areas within the County that possess starry nights and a nocturnal environment of exceptional quality</p>

	<p>and to explore the potential of establishing a Dark Sky Reserve in the County; and</p> <p>b) Subject to resources, to replace public lighting systems throughout the County with more energy efficient, money saving, dark-sky compliant lighting.</p>
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15.2.23 Alien and Invasive Species

Invasive species are species that have been introduced by humans (either accidentally or intentionally) to areas outside their normal habitat range. There is potential for the spread of such species through aquaculture and horticulture, during excavation and construction works, by boat users and from private gardens. Once such species become established, they can spread quickly, and the economic and environmental costs can be considerable. The risk of accidental transfer of non-native invasive species requires adherence to current best practice protocol for avoiding the spread or transfer of all invasive animals and plants. Examples of invasive species include the Zebra Mussel, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam Giant Hogweed and the Asian Clam.

Bio-security measures are required to prevent the accidental spread of invasive species by people and to ensure that invasive species are not transported to or from different locations and it is important to consider potential pathways of introduction and for mitigation measures to be put in place to prevent their spread. Bio-security measures for working in or near water are also required to prevent the spread of Crayfish Plague.

Development Plan Objective: Alien and Invasive Species	
CDP15.29	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <p>a) To raise awareness of the threat of alien invasive species and how they can spread, and take all necessary steps to prevent the spread of non-native invasive species and noxious weeds in the Plan area, including requiring landowners, developers and boat operators to adhere to best practice guidance in relation to their control;</p> <p>b) To require all development proposals to address the presence of invasive alien species on the proposed development site and to require an Invasive Species Management Plan where such species are present;</p> <p>c) To carry out surveys of invasive species across the County;</p> <p>d) To implement the requirements of EU Regulations 1143/2014 on the Prevention and Management of the Introduction and Spread of Invasive Alien Species and to manage invasive hydrological connectivity issues to European Sites to prevent the spread of invasive species to sensitive sites; and</p>

e) To facilitate the work of agencies addressing the issue of terrestrial and aquatic invasive alien species.

15.3 Green Infrastructure and Climate Change

Green infrastructure is the integrated and interconnected network of green space and water capable of delivering ecosystem services and quality of life benefits to people and includes features such as parks, gardens, green roofs, green walls, rivers, lakes, canals, peatland, wetland landscapes, uplands, greenways, blueways, woodlands and farmlands in our countryside and settlements. The NPF outlines the importance of the interrelationships between biodiversity, natural heritage, landscape and green spaces and states that integrated planning for green infrastructure and ecosystem services is to be incorporated into land use plans. Green infrastructure is therefore interwoven throughout the chapters of this Development Plan.

Green infrastructure can halt and reverse biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation and degradation and improve ecosystem resilience. It can also facilitate climate change adaptation and mitigation by requiring the retention and strengthening of substantial networks of green space in urban and urban fringe areas and into the wider countryside. Green infrastructure also provides economic, educational, ecological and social benefits through natural solutions and helps us to understand the advantages that nature can offer to society.

The protection of natural features such as floodplains, wetlands, woodlands and hedgerows provide multiple benefits including climate change adaptation and flood risk management. Whilst there will always be a need for traditional 'grey infrastructure', in many cases it can be reinforced with solutions provided by nature. Also, while traditional 'grey infrastructure' typically only fulfils a single function, green infrastructure can provide multiple solutions that are cheaper, more robust and more sustainable from both economic and social perspectives. The settlement plans in Volume 3 of the Development Plan will protect, manage and provide, where possible, green infrastructure in an integrated and coherent manner.

In urban areas green infrastructure enhances the public realm and increases the attractiveness of towns and villages as places to live, work and visit. This infrastructure can be used for a wide range of outdoor recreation, including walking and cycling, and also acts as a wildlife and biodiversity corridor. Within County Clare opportunities exist to expand and strengthen the green infrastructure network and to further explore its integration into both public and private developments in the future.



**Development Plan Objective:
Green Infrastructure and Climate Change**

CDP15.30

It is an objective of Clare County Council:

- a) To work to create an integrated and coherent green infrastructure network to enhance biodiversity and quality of life, to facilitate the movement of wildlife, to connect areas of high conservation value such as woodlands, hedgerows, earth banks, watercourses and wetlands, and to provide sustainable water management and a green setting for urban areas;
- b) To promote and facilitate the on-going development and improvement of green infrastructure, green corridors and ecosystem services in the Plan area, including green networks, green amenities and linked green corridors which ensure the provisions of recreational amenities, natural areas for the growth of wildlife and biodiversity, and a network of infrastructure which results in a better quality of life for visitors and inhabitants alike;
- c) To implement the adopted Green Infrastructure Plan for Shannon Town and its environs and any subsequent plan;
- d) To prepare a green infrastructure plan for Ennis and Kilrush during the lifetime of this Plan;
- e) To work with community groups to access funding for appropriate and beneficial green infrastructure projects including parks, woodlands, sports facilities, green areas, playground/play facilities, river corridors, walkways,



cemeteries, churchyards, utility grounds, paths, seating and amenities;

f) To require new amenity and/or recreational developments under the heading of green infrastructure to have regard to the recommendations as contained within the EU Biodiversity Strategy in the development of Green Infrastructure.

g) To require the preparation and assessment of all planning applications associated with amenity and/or recreational uses under the heading of green infrastructure to have regard to the information, data and requirements of the Appropriate Assessment Natura Impact Report, SEA Environmental Report and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Report contained in Volume 10 of this Plan;

h) To require projects to be fully informed by ecological and environmental constraints at the earliest stage of project planning and that any necessary assessment be undertaken, including assessments of disturbance to species, where required; and

i) To ensure compliance with all relevant legislation as outlined in Objective CDP3.3.

Chapter 16 Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage

Goal XVI: A county that affords protection and conservation to buildings, areas, structures, sites and features of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest and recognises them as a social, cultural and economic asset to the County.

Chapter 16 Table of Contents:

16.0	Introduction
16.1	Strategic Aims
16.2	Context
16.3	Architectural Heritage
16.3.1	Protected Structures
16.3.2	Industrial Heritage
16.3.3	Vernacular Heritage
16.3.4	Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)
16.3.5	Protected Species
16.3.6	Supporting the Improvement of Architectural Heritage
16.4	Archaeological Heritage
16.4.1	Underwater Archaeology
16.5	Cultural Heritage
16.5.1	Museums, Heritage and Cultural Centres
16.5.2	Genealogy
16.5.3	Oidhreachta Theanga: Linguistic Heritage
16.5.4	Folklore and Oral Cultural Heritage

16.0 Introduction

County Clare has a rich and diverse architectural and archaeological heritage and is also renowned as a centre of cultural heritage. This heritage contributes to the visual enhancement of our existing landscapes and streetscapes, the creation of a sense of identity and pride and the enrichment of daily life. This plan aims to support and enhance appreciation of the county's heritage to ensure that it can be enjoyed by both current and future generations.

The Development Plan includes a record of Protected Structures, and this record includes every structure which is, in the opinion of the Planning Authority, of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. Volume 4 of this Development Plan comprises the Record of Protected Structures.

16.1 Strategic Aims

The Development Plan Objectives relating to the conservation and management of the architectural, archaeological and cultural heritage of the county are based on the following strategic aims:

- To protect and enhance the character of the built environment by means of the Record of Protected Structures and Architectural Conservation Areas;
- To enhance present and future environments by protecting the architectural heritage of the county and successfully integrating new development;
- To protect the archaeology resource in the county for both its intrinsic and tourism value;
- To promote and support cultural activities, facilities and services in County Clare; and
- To protect and enhance the vernacular built environment across the county.

16.2 Context

County Clare is home to a wealth of architectural and archaeological heritage including some of the best examples of early settlement areas in Europe.

Legal protections are provided by several statutory instruments including the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and the National Monuments Act 1930 (as amended), whilst the Development Plan includes a Record of Protected Structures, Architectural Conservation Area designations and objectives in relation to architectural and archaeological heritage.

The built environment is a dynamic entity which may need to adjust to meet the needs of today's society. In the case of architectural heritage, proposed changes must be sensitive to the character and features of the existing built environment.

16.3 Architectural Heritage

The built heritage of County Clare (i.e. both archaeological and architectural heritage) and its cultural heritage add to the distinctive character of the county, are a tangible link to its past, and contribute to the county being an attractive place in which to live, work and visit.

Development Plan Objective: Architectural Heritage	
CDP16.1	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To ensure the protection of the architectural heritage of County Clare through the identification of Protected Structures, the designation of Architectural Conservation Areas, the safeguarding of historic gardens, and the recognition of structures and elements that contribute positively to the vernacular and industrial heritage of the county; and</p> <p>b) To ensure that the archaeological and architectural heritage of the county is not damaged either through direct destruction or by unsympathetic developments.</p> <p>c) To support and promote architectural vernacular skills training and facilities in the county</p>

16.3.1 Protected Structures

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) requires each Local Authority to compile a Record of Protected Structures (RPS) as part of the Development Plan and this is included in Volume 4 of this Plan. For each structure information is required on the ‘*category of special interest*’ for which it is listed.

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) also removes exempted development rights where works to a Protected Structure (or a proposed Protected Structure) will materially affect the character of the structure or any element of the structure which contributes to its special interest. Planning permission would be required in such instances. As alterations to a Protected Structure may alter existing streetscapes or rural scenes, the assessment of works to such structures should also consider the potential effects on the wider context and setting.

Protected Structures (or part(s) thereof) may include vernacular architecture, historic parklands and gardens and industrial artefacts or structures. Aside from buildings, other elements of interest include items such as pumps, fountains, lime kilns, post boxes, stone walls, gate piers, street furniture, paving, traditional shop-fronts, carriage-ways and jostle stones etc.

Development Plan Objective: Protected Structures	
CDP16.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To protect, as set out in the Record of Protected Structures, all structures, which are of special architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social, or technical interest; and</p> <p>b) To review the Record of Protected Structures periodically and add structures of special interest as appropriate, including significant elements of industrial, maritime or vernacular heritage and any twentieth century structures of merit.</p>

16.3.2 Industrial Heritage

Various buildings and structures throughout the county, such as mills, bridges, quays, railways, canals and warehouses represent the evolution of industry in the county, provide a timeline from early industry to modern times (e.g. early watermills, hydro-electric generation to newer wind energy developments), and many, which are of special interest, contribute to Clare’s built heritage. This heritage extends to archaeological sites and objects which provide evidence of early tool production, metal works and mining activities.

Development Plan Objective: Industrial Heritage	
CDP16.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To protect and preserve buildings and features of industrial heritage such as mills, bridges, lighthouses and harbours, amongst others. Proposals for refurbishment works to, or redevelopment/conversion of, these sites will be subject to a full architectural and archaeological assessment together with an ecological assessment with respect to the presence of protected species.</p>

16.3.3 Vernacular Heritage

County Clare has a diverse range of historic buildings and structures in both urban and rural areas including cottages, houses, shops, farm complexes, outbuildings, mills, factories and forges which date mainly from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries. These were the homes and workplaces of the local people and were built with local materials. These buildings and structures represent Clare’s Built Vernacular Heritage and comprise of “local or regional traditional building forms and types using indigenous materials, and without grand architectural pretensions” (from James Steven Curl’s Encyclopaedia of Architectural Terms) and are in contrast with formal architecture (e.g. demesne houses and public buildings) designed by architects and engineers.

The form, scale, indigenous materials (such as use of limestone/sandstone masonry, Moher/Killaloe slate for roofs and so on) and orientation of local vernacular buildings often come to represent the distinctive character of a particular area, and whilst many may not merit specific inclusion on the Record of Protected Structures, they do however make a positive contribution to that character. The Council recognises that many of these buildings are homes and workplaces that may need to evolve to facilitate ongoing use, and to address the loss of the existing built vernacular the Council will encourage the appropriate re-use and sensitive redevelopment of vernacular buildings rather than their replacement or dereliction where practicable.

Development Plan Objective: Revitalisation of Vernacular Heritage	
CDP16.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To seek the retention, appreciation and appropriate revitalisation of the vernacular heritage of County Clare, in towns, villages and rural areas, by discouraging the replacement of good quality vernacular buildings with modern structures and by protecting vernacular buildings where they contribute to the character of an area or settlement and/or where they are rare examples of a structure type;</p> <p>b) To support proposals to refurbish vernacular structures that are in a sub-standard or derelict condition, provided that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Appropriate traditional building materials and methods are used to carry out repairs to the historic fabric; II. Proposals for extensions to vernacular structures are reflective and proportionate to the existing building and do not erode the setting and design qualities of the original structure which make it attractive III. Direction for the design is taken from the historic building stock of the area, though it can be expressed in contemporary architectural language; and <p>(c) To ensure that visitor pressures from tourism associated with built and cultural heritage do not impact negatively on the capacity of local services (including water, waste water) or facilities such as car parking.</p>

16.3.4 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)

Architectural Conservation Areas are places, areas, groups of structures or parts of townscapes which are of special interest or contribute to the appreciation of Protected Structures. Historic street patterns, plot sizes, street furniture, shop and pub fronts all collectively contribute to the character of urban areas and should be recognised and retained.

Architectural Conservation Areas have been designated in 30 historic town and village cores in Clare (listed in Appendix 4) to assist and encourage the retention and re-use of vernacular structures and historic elements and to address the gradual attrition of architectural details such as the replacement of existing finishes with modern materials, the removal of external render and inappropriate building extensions.

ACA designations are intended to ensure that new developments make a positive contribution to an area that has been identified as being of significant importance. The aim is to retain the overall special architectural or historical character of an area or place. Unless a structure is also included on the Record of Protected Structures, the protected status afforded from inclusion in an ACA only applies to the exterior and streetscape. The exempted development rights for works to the exterior of a structure are removed by the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) where these works are located in an ACA and would materially affect the character of the area.

Development Plan Objective: Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)	
CDP16.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To ensure that new developments within or adjacent to an ACA respect the established character context of the area and contribute positively to the ACA in terms of design, scale, setting and material finishes; b) To protect from demolition or removal and non-sympathetic alterations, existing buildings, structures, groups of structures, sites, landscapes and features such as street furniture and paving, which are considered to be intrinsic elements of the special character of the ACA; c) To ensure that all new signage, lighting, advertising and utilities to buildings within an ACA are designed, constructed and located in a manner that does not detract from and is complementary to the character of the ACA; and d) To ensure that external colour schemes in ACAs enhance the character and amenities of the area and reflect traditional colour schemes.

16.3.5 Protected Species

The ongoing use and upkeep of Clare’s built heritage must have regard to the potential use of these buildings and structures as habitats for protected species so as to ensure the appropriate conservation of these species.

Development Plan Objective: Proposed Works to Buildings - Protected Species and Environmental Considerations	
CDP16.6	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To protect habitats and species when considering proposed works to buildings which are likely to impact on protected ecological sites and protected species and to ensure that decision-making on heritage related projects and developments is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment.

16.3.6 Supporting the Improvement of Architectural Heritage

The costs relating to the maintenance and conservation of the architectural heritage in the county are acknowledged and grant schemes such as the Historic Structures Fund, the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, the Historic Towns Initiative, the Heritage Council Grants Scheme and the Conservation of Traditional Farm Buildings Grant Scheme may provide financial assistance in this regard.

Local communities play a significant role in maintaining and protecting local architectural heritage. The Council will continue to encourage communities, owners and occupiers to maintain these buildings and structures in accordance with the Advice Series booklets published by the Architectural Heritage Advisory Unit of the then Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government. In addition, in accordance with the Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024, the Council will help to build resilience to the impacts of climate change on the archaeological and architectural heritage assets in the County.

Development Plan Objective: Maintenance and Improvement of Architectural Heritage	
CDP16.7	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To advocate for greater financial assistance, including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme and the Historic Structures Fund, for the maintenance and improvement of architectural heritage in County Clare; b) To support community initiatives and projects regarding preservation, presentation and access to archaeological heritage and underwater cultural heritage, provided such are compatible with appropriate conservation policies and standards, having regard to the guidance and advice of The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage c) To provide advice and guidance to community groups, owners and occupiers with regards to the maintenance and repair of buildings and structures of architectural heritage importance and to promote initiatives by the Council, the

	<p>Heritage Council, local communities, heritage property owners and other stakeholders pursuing the maintenance and improvement of the architectural heritage; and</p> <p>d) To undertake a risk assessment of the Archaeological and Architectural Heritage and Cultural Assets in the county to assess the vulnerability and the risk to the historical environment from the impacts of climate change and to help build resilience to these important assets.</p>
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16.4 Archaeological Heritage

Archaeology comprises of the surviving remains of human presence from early times and it consists of known and as yet unidentified sites, monuments and objects. A monument can be defined as a man-made structure or group of structures or a natural structure that has been altered by man. It may consist of sites where there are no visible features but where below-surface, archaeological remains are known or expected to exist. The National Monuments Acts 1930-2004, International Conventions ratified by Ireland, the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 and the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) provide legal protection for archaeological sites from unauthorised damage or interference. A number of monuments are afforded additional protection by being in the ownership or guardianship of the State or by being the subject of temporary preservation orders (National Monuments) and registration orders, as informed by the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage and any works which would have direct impacts on such monuments require the consent of the Minister.

The Record of Monuments and Places (RMP) was compiled under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 and comprises of all monuments in Ireland known to the Minister in 1994. The RMP consists of a set of constraint maps and an accompanying manual, on which all the known archaeological sites in County Clare are included.

In any instance where, following consultation between the Council and the National Monuments Service it is determined that it is not possible to continue to protect a building of special historic interest or a site of archaeological interest (e.g. due to required infrastructure encroachments or where the site/building is in dangerous condition), it is the policy of the Council to:

- Survey, excavate and record the site in accordance with the requirements/guidelines of the appropriate authorities (photogrammetric surveys, inventories and databases); and
- Conduct an assessment to determine the best method of conserving and displaying any fragments of buildings such as ornamental door cases, street names, commemorative signs etc.

The qualities of archaeological or architectural interest are not mutually exclusive with certain structures having both qualities. In such instances these items are included on both the Record of Monuments and Places and the Record of Protected Structures.

Development Plan Objective: Sites, Features and Objects of Archaeological Interest	
CDP16.8	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally; b) To secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally; c) In securing such preservation, to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of the Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; d) To have regard to the government publication Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999 in relation to protecting sites, features and objects of archaeological interest; and e) To advocate for greater financial assistance for the maintenance and improvement of features of archaeological interests in County Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Newly Discovered Archaeological Sites	
CDP16.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To protect and preserve archaeological sites discovered since the publication of the Record of Monuments and Places.</p>

Development Plan Objective: Zones of Archaeological Potential	
CDP16.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To protect the Zones of Archaeological Potential located within both urban and rural areas as identified in the Record of Monuments and Places.</p>

Development Plan Objective: Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes	
CDP16.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that decisions relating to development (including infrastructure associated with broadband, telecommunications, renewable energy, major road/ rail infrastructure, flood relief schemes and other services) which may have implications for Recorded Archaeological</p>

	Monuments/Sites, Zones of Archaeological Potential or undiscovered archaeology, are informed by an appropriate level of archaeological investigation undertaken by qualified persons and the case of flood relief schemes have regard to archaeological Guidelines for Flood Relief Schemes (DHLGH and OPW2022).
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**Development Plan Objective:
Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological
Heritage**

CDP16.12	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Built and Archaeological Heritage 2019, as published by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and any subsequent guidance or plans for dealing with climate change and archaeological heritage. The Council shall seek to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Promote awareness and the appropriate adaptation of Ireland’s built and archaeological heritage to deal with the effects of climate change; b) Identify the built and archaeological heritage in Local Authority ownership and areas at risk from climate change including, but not necessarily restricted to, the Record of Monuments and Places, Protected Structures and architectural conservation areas designated in the Development Plan; c) Undertake climate change vulnerability assessments for the historic structures and sites in its area, subject to resources and funding; d) Develop disaster risk reduction policies addressing direct and indirect risks to the built and archaeological heritage in its area; e) Develop resilience and adaptation strategies for the built and archaeological heritage in its area; f) Develop the skills capacity within the Local Authority to address adaptation/mitigation/emergency management issues affecting historic structures and sites in order to avoid inadvertent loss or damage in the course of climate change adaptation or mitigation works.
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Development Plan Objective: Raising Archaeological Awareness	
CDP16.12	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To raise awareness of and improve practice in relation to archaeology in County Clare; and b) To promote the care and conservation of historic graveyards throughout the county. Within the lifetime of the Plan it is an objective to prepare conservation plans for a number of historical church and graveyard sites, with the objective of identifying necessary works required to address the decay of the fabric of the sites.

16.4.1 Underwater Archaeology

County Clare has an extensive coastline and a network of inland water bodies with a rich and diverse underwater archaeology. From the Bronze Age fish weir at Islandmagrath (Fergus Estuary), medieval fish weirs and 18th and 19th century kelp walls in the Shannon Estuary to the possible location of Spanish Armada ships off the west coast of Quilty, great opportunities exist to further investigate this archaeological potential.

The strongest legal protection under the National Monuments Acts in respect of monuments is afforded to national monuments of which the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage or a local authority is owner or guardian or in respect of which a Preservation Order under the National Monuments Acts is in force. A national monument is any monument the preservation of which is a matter of national importance by reason of the archaeological, architectural, historical, traditional or artistic interest attaching to it. The consent of the Minister is required for interference with such national monuments or ground disturbance around or in proximity to them. Under the National Monuments Acts, the Minister and local authorities must maintain national monuments of which they are owners or guardians (the OPW has day-to-day responsibility in relation to national monuments owned by or in guardianship of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and, subject to such restrictions as are reasonably necessary, seek to provide public access to such national monuments. A list of National Monuments designated in each local authority area and of the Preservation Orders currently in force can be found at www.archaeology.ie.

All wrecks over 100 years old (whether previously known or just discovered) and all archaeological objects situated underwater, are protected under Section 3 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1987. Wrecks of any date and the potential location of wrecks or archaeological objects may also be protected under Section 3 of the 1987 (Amendment) Act by the making of an underwater heritage order, if considered to be of sufficient historical, archaeological or artistic importance to merit such protection. Information on known wrecks can be found in The Department's Wreck Viewer at www.archaeology.ie

Development Plan Objective: Underwater Archaeology	
CDP16.13	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>a) To protect, preserve and promote the archaeological value of underwater archaeological sites in rivers, lakes, coastal, marine, intertidal and sub tidal environments; and</p> <p>b) To support the further exploration of the underwater archaeology of County Clare, including the San Marcos project, and any subsequent projects that may arise during the lifetime of this Plan.</p>

16.5 Cultural Heritage

In addition to tangible heritage such as buildings, monuments, books, works of art and artefacts, cultural heritage also includes intangibles such as folklore, traditions, language, music, knowledge, culturally-significant landscapes and biodiversity. In this regard, County Clare is culturally rich and is known for its traditional music, dancing, iconic landscapes and its varied cultural offering.

Development Plan Objective: Art, Heritage, Cultural and Creative Sectors	
CDP16.14	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>(a) To conserve and enhance its cultural identity and enable access to both culturally-distinct areas and facilities for cultural experiences;</p> <p>(b) To advocate for investment in infrastructure and initiatives that develop the role of arts, heritage and culture and employment opportunities in these sectors in County Clare including funding streams outlined in 'Project Ireland 2040 Investing in our Culture, Language and Heritage 2018-2027';</p> <p>(c) To assist in the delivery of actions under arts, heritage and cultural strategies in the county;</p> <p>(d) To ensure that decisions relating to investment in arts, cultural and heritage infrastructure/facilities are informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment; and</p> <p>(e) To develop a vibrant cultural and creative sector in County Clare as a key enabler of enterprise growth, innovation, regeneration, place-making and community development, health and wellbeing and support measures under Culture 2025, Creative Ireland Strategy 2017-2022 and the Action Plan for Rural Development.</p>

16.5.1 Museums, Heritage and Cultural Centres

There are a number of centres across the county including the Clare County Museum in Ennis which work to collect, record, preserve and display local aspects of County Clare’s unique history, heritage and culture.

Development Plan Objective: Museums, Heritage and Cultural Centres	
CDP16.15	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate further development of and extensions to museum, heritage centres and archives across the county; b) To ensure that the County Museum’s collections and associated information are accessible to the public; c) To promote a wider appreciation and understanding of the unique natural, cultural and archaeological heritage of the County; d) To recognise and support the role of private and community facilities in making heritage artefacts and information available to the public; and (e) To support the development of a network of community arts and cultural hubs.

16.5.2 Genealogy

County Clare has an extensive array of genealogical resources and the Clare County Library and Local Studies Centre house useful research information such as the Graveyards Inscription Collection and emigration records.

Development Plan Objective: Genealogy	
CDP16.16	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the on-going collection of information of genealogical interest in the county and to make such data available in multiple formats to facilitate genealogical research.</p>

16.5.3 Oidhreacht Theanga: Linguistic Heritage

In aitheantas do thábhacht na Gaeilge don oidhreacht chultúrtha agus teangacha Contae an Chláir, cuirfidh an Comhairle chun tosaigh í, i gcomhar le grúpaí ar nós Conradh na Gaeilge, An Clár as Gaeilge agus Foras na Gaeilge.

In recognition of the importance of the Irish language to the linguistic and cultural heritage of County Clare the Council will, in conjunction with groups such as Conradh na Gaeilge, An Clár as Gaeilge and Foras na Gaeilge continue to promote the Irish language.

Development Plan Objective: Oidhreacht Theanga/Linguistic Heritage	
CDP16.17	<p>Cuspóir de chuid Chomhairle Contae an Chláir is ea:</p> <p>a) Soláthar a dhéanamh ar oidhreacht chultúrtha agus teanga an Chontae trí thacaíocht a thabhairt do eagraíochtaí atá bainteach le caomhnú agus cothú na teanga agus an chultúir Ghaelaigh agus le normalú a dhéanamh ar úsáid na Gaeilge.</p> <p>b) Obair dhearfach agus spreagúil a dhéanamh le timpeallacht dhátheangach a chruthú is a chosaint agus a chinntiú go mbeidh deiseanna ar fáil le húsáid a bhaint as an nGaeilge labhartha agus scríofa.</p> <p>c) Tacaíocht a thabhairt chun Plean Teanga Ghréasán Gaeilge na hInse a chur i bhfeidhm.</p> <p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To provide for the linguistic and cultural heritage of the county through the provision of support for organisations involved in the continued promotion and preservation of the Irish language and culture and the normalising of the use of Irish;</p> <p>b) To work in a positive and encouraging way to create and maintain a bilingual environment in the county, and to ensure the availability of opportunities for the use of spoken and written Irish.</p> <p>(c) To support the implementation of the Language Plan for the Irish Language Network in Ennis.</p>

16.5.4 Folklore and Oral Cultural Heritage

The importance of County Clare’s folkloric and oral cultural heritage to the current and future generations and the work within communities to ensure that local traditions are kept alive are acknowledged by the Council. The Council will work with groups such as Cuimhneamh an Chláir to realise their objectives with regard to the gathering, recording, preservation and promotion of Clare’s folklore and oral cultural heritage.

Development Plan Objective: Folklore and Oral Cultural Heritage	
CDP16.18	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council</p> <p>To support and facilitate the gathering, recording, preservation and promotion of folklore and oral cultural heritage in the county and to work closely with groups such as Cuimhneamh an Chláir to realise their objectives.</p>

Chapter 17 Towns and Villages

Goal XVII: A county with a strong and vibrant network of towns and villages that provides a wide range of services and a high quality of life for residents of the County.

Chapter 17 Table of Contents:

17.0	Introduction
17.1	Strategic Aims
17.2	Town and Village Consolidation, Renewal and Regeneration
17.2.1	Town and Village Centre Vibrancy
17.2.2	Town and Village Improvement Strategies
17.2.3	Town Teams
17.2.4	Regeneration and Development Funding
17.2.5	Opportunity Sites
17.2.6	Addressing Vacancy
17.2.7	Addressing Depopulation
17.2.8	Lands Identified as Areas On Which the Vacant Site Levy can Apply
17.2.9	Derelict Sites
17.2.10	Town Centre Infill Sites
17.2.11	Tidy Towns and Community Groups

17.0 Introduction

The towns and villages in County Clare each with its own unique community, contribute to the overall identity of the county and fulfil multiple roles including service provision, centres of employment and social and recreational opportunities. The larger towns such as Ennis and Shannon drive economic growth in the county, while smaller towns and villages act as focal points and service centres for their local communities.

The issues faced in towns and villages across Ireland which relate to services reduction, limited employment opportunities and the quality of the public realm are also experienced in County Clare. Throughout the lifetime of this Plan, Clare County Council will prioritise the renewal and regeneration of these settlements supporting their consolidation and growth. In addition to the aims and objectives as set out in this Chapter, Volume 3 of this Plan provides targeted analysis and proposals in relation to individual settlements.

17.1 Strategic Aims

This Chapter presents the objectives required to support the consolidation, renewal and growth of the towns and villages of County Clare throughout the lifetime of this Plan. In accordance with the overall Vision for the Plan, it is based on the following strategic aims:

- To support the renewal of towns and villages in need of economic, social and/or physical regeneration;
- To achieve the beneficial reuse of vacant, derelict or under-utilised sites, particularly the identified Opportunity Sites;
- To identify and actively engage in initiatives that will support economic growth and social and physical regeneration in the towns and villages of the county;
- To support local communities across the county in their work to enhance their towns and villages; and
- To identify physical changes that could enhance the public realm and ‘sense of place’ in the county’s towns and villages.

17.2 Town and Village Consolidation, Renewal and Regeneration

17.2.1 Town Centre First

Our Rural Future, Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 (Government of Ireland, 2021) outlines a vision to support the regeneration and development of rural towns and villages to contribute to local and national economic recovery, and to enable people to live and work in a vibrant environment. The Town Centre First policy, launched in February 2022, is central to this vision. Town Centre First represents a new approach to the development of our towns where local communities and local businesses can be central to reimagining their own towns and planning their own futures. Every town is different. Each town is unique and requires unique solutions to the challenges and opportunities they face. The Town Centre First policy aims to create town centres that function as viable, vibrant and attractive locations for people

to live, work and visit, while also functioning as the service, social, cultural and recreational hub for the local community. The Town Centre First policy document includes a series of key priorities and actions which collectively will create framework to support towns to achieve the desired outcomes and deliver on their own unique vision.

As a first step, a pilot scheme to develop Town Centre Masterplans for selected towns across the country including Sixmilebridge in County Clare, has been initiated. Funding has been provided for the delivery of these masterplans and it is envisaged that they will provide a vision for the development of the town, building buy-in from existing property owners and the local community. The masterplan will include a detailed study of the area and will identify key projects/actions to further the realisation of the vision. The masterplan will subsequently provide a basis for the town to seek support from multiple funding streams, including the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and Town & Village Renewal Scheme, which will help to maximise State investment, and will offer an opportunity for the delivery of a co-ordinated programme of investment for the area, rather than funding being sought and spent on individual projects on an ad-hoc basis.

The Town Centre First Masterplan is currently underway for Sixmilebridge, with locations and programming of further Town Centre First Masterplans to be identified at a future date.

17.2.2 Town and Village Centre Vibrancy

A vibrant town/village centre that provides a variety of services and functions is essential in any settlement and a strong retail sector coupled with a mix of business, social and residential uses contributes to the health of the settlement. Due to societal restrictions associated with the Covid-19 pandemic some of these sectors have faced unprecedented challenges resulting in related issues for town and village centres. However, as we emerge from the pandemic there will be opportunities to enhance the vibrancy and vitality of the town and village centres across the County.

The needs of each town and village are different and require interventions such as public realm enhancement works, retail health checks and vacant site surveys in order to tailor actions to their individual needs. Chapter 7 of this Plan sets out the development objectives to support the retail sector across the County.

Development Plan Objective: Town and Village Centre Vibrancy	
CDP17.1	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <p>a) To support the development of the national “Town Centre First” principle to aid in the development and coordination of regeneration, revitalisation and growth in vibrancy of our towns and villages.</p> <p>b) To carry out public realm enhancement works as well as retail health checks, vacant site and derelict site surveys and other essential research and analysis to inform the actions</p>

	required to support town and village centre renewal and development projects across County Clare.
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17.2.3 Town and Village Improvement Strategies

Clare County Council has strong relationships with local communities and other relevant stakeholders and, resources permitting, will continue to use an inter-departmental and multi-disciplinary approach to further these relationships and to prepare improvement strategies for towns and villages across the County. These actions, plans and strategies will be prepared to achieve the physical enhancement of the public realm in areas that have been identified as most in need of improvement.

The Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy has the potential to stimulate the economy, transform the quality of life and enhance the environment of Ennis. It will inform and drive the economic, social and physical development of Ennis as an investment location and a place to live. The Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project, which is part funded through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) is an example of a large-scale public realm project.

Shannon Town Centre Masterplan is being prepared and part funded through the URDF. Ennistymon has also been granted funding under Fáilte Ireland’s Destination Towns Funding Programme with significant public realm works delivered. In addition, Fáilte Ireland’s ‘Development Guidelines for Tourism Destination Towns’ publication provides a framework to support communities and Local Authorities and sets out the key drivers of what makes a town appealing to the international visitor. Other actions undertaken to date to revitalise existing centres include the preparation of ‘Towards a Better Kilkee – A Town Improvement and Economic Development Strategy 2014-2024’, feasibility studies for Cappa, Corofin and Ennistymon and the inclusion of co-working digital hub facilities in Ennis, Corofin, Ennistymon, Feakle, Kilrush, Kilkee, Miltown Malbay, Cross and Caran.

Development Plan Objective: Town and Village Improvement Strategies	
CDP17.2	It is an objective of Clare County Council: a) To work with all relevant stakeholders to prepare improvement strategies for areas identified as being in need of enhancement during the lifetime of this Plan; and b) To support the preparation and implementation of Tidy Towns Environmental Improvement Strategies for towns and villages in County Clare.

Development Plan Objective: Shannon Town Centre	
CDP17.3	It is an objective of Clare County Council:

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| | <p>a) To support the delivery of improvements and enhancements to Shannon Town Centre to create a sense of place, to upgrade the public realm and promote redevelopment;</p> <p>b) To support the development of a Shannon Town centre Masterplan. This Plan shall be subject to the Appropriate Assessment process and/or the implementation of this Plan shall be subject to the appropriate environmental assessments including Appropriate Assessment as required by Objective 3.3; and</p> <p>c) To support investment in the review of the Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan and its resulting projects. The Green Infrastructure Plan shall be subject to the Appropriate Assessment process and/or the implementation of resulting projects shall be subject to the appropriate environmental assessments including Appropriate Assessment as required.</p> |
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17.2.4 Town Teams

Town teams are generally comprised of key stakeholders who are representative of the business and civic interests of the town centre and can support regeneration and enhance the economic development of town centre areas. The role of the Town Team is to prepare and implement a plan to achieve a healthy town centre in its area. The plan must clearly express the vision for the town, the actions required and who is responsible for each element of implementation. The plan must take account of 'internal factors' affecting the town and external factors such as the state of the economy. It must also contain performance indicators or a means of assessing if the plan is working and to determine if modification is required. The town team approach, which is a collaborative approach to identifying priorities within towns and planning for their future is now in place in Ennistymon, Kilrush and Scariff. The work of such teams has the potential to assist in the appropriate consolidation, renewal and regeneration of settlement centres.

**Development Plan Objective:
Town Teams**

CDP17.4	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council: To work with the existing Town Teams established in Ennistymon, Kilrush and Scariff and such teams when established in other towns across the County during the lifetime of the Plan.</p>
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17.2.5 Regeneration and Development Funding

The Urban Regeneration and Development Fund supports the objectives of the National Planning Framework (NPF) and National Development Plan (NDP) 2021-2030). It aims to deliver more compact and sustainable development, through part-funding regeneration and rejuvenation projects in cities and large settlements. The Rural Regeneration and Development Fund seeks to support job creation in rural areas, address de-population of rural communities and support improvements in our towns and villages with a population of less than 10,000, and outlying areas. Clare County Council has been successful in securing funding from these sources for projects such as Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project, Lahinch Seaworld and Town Upgrade Project, Vandeleur Estate restoration works, Loop Head lighthouse refurbishment, Inis Cealtra Island design works and Doolin Pier Masterplan. The Council will continue to seek part funding for projects in County Clare from these funding sources during the lifetime of this Plan.

In addition to these funding sources the Town and Village Renewal Scheme is an initiative under the Government's Action Plan for Rural Development 'Realising our Rural Potential' designed to rejuvenate small rural towns and villages and is coordinated by Clare County

Council. The Council seeks expressions of interest annually with regard to projects which may be eligible to apply for this funding stream.

Development Plan Objective: Regeneration and Development Funding	
CDP17.5	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To identify projects and progress competitive bids for urban and rural projects in the County from the National Urban and Rural Regeneration and Development Funds during the lifetime of this Plan; and</p> <p>b) To seek expressions of interest annually for projects which may be eligible to apply for funding through the Town and Village Renewal Scheme.</p>

17.2.6 Opportunity Sites

A series of Opportunity Sites have been identified in the towns and villages across the County, the redevelopment of which would make a significant positive contribution to the settlement in which they are located. This contribution can be from either a physical or economic perspective. They have been identified for one or more of the following reasons:

- The redevelopment of the site is central to the achievement of the overall vision of the settlement;
- The redevelopment of the site has the potential to create a significant number of jobs;
- The redevelopment of the site would provide a space for business/activities not currently available in the town; and
- The site represents a gap in the fabric of the townscape in the given settlement and its redevelopment would make a significant contribution to the overall appearance and amenity of the area.

Details in relation to each Opportunity Site and the potential future uses for which they have been identified are set out in the relevant settlement plans contained in Volume 3 of this Plan. Opportunity Sites can be in either public or private ownership. Sites in public ownership generally comprise of under-utilised public spaces or civic buildings that offer the potential for enhanced local amenities and also improvements to the public realm. Sites in private ownership are most commonly premises or sites in key locations within the settlement with significant future development potential.

Development Plan Objective: Opportunity Sites	
CDP17.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To work with all relevant stakeholders on an on-going basis to secure the successful redevelopment of identified Opportunity Sites; and b) Subject to resources, to provide technical assistance/guidance to support the redevelopment of Opportunity Sites.

17.2.7 Addressing Vacancy

Town and village centres are dynamic entities and temporary/short term vacancy can often form part of the natural cycle of development and growth. However longer-term vacancy, which can be caused by various socio-economic factors or physical constraints, can become problematic, particularly if the properties are not maintained to a high standard whilst vacant. Building vacancy in towns and villages has become increasingly prevalent, resulting in the demise of the historic vibrancy and vitality of town and village centres. The re-use and regeneration of these buildings are essential catalysts for transforming the capacity and potential of these settlements. It is important to secure a beneficial use for vacant properties in the Plan area in order to ensure that they do not fall into disrepair and begin to have a negative impact on the appearance of their environs. It is also important to ensure that there is a strong mix of uses in town centres, including residential uses.

In order to stimulate economic and social activity in towns and villages the Council will continue to identify areas where long-term vacancy is an issue and to assist in examining the reasons for vacancy and work in cooperation with landlords and occupiers to secure appropriate regeneration. In accordance with NPF objectives NPO16 and NPO35 the Council will target the reversal of decline in the centre of towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.

Development Plan Objective: Town and Village Centre Vacancy	
CDP17.7	<p>It is an objective of the Development Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To facilitate a co-ordinated and proactive approach to address vacancy in the Plan area, including liaising with owners, identifying barriers to use and examining design solutions proposed by owners to resolving identified difficulties; b) To facilitate/promote the alternative beneficial use of vacant property where the proposal will not negatively impact on the amenity of adjoining properties, the environment or movement/transport in the area;

	<p>c) To continue to identify vacant Council-owned buildings and enterprise spaces in settlements in the County and work to maximise occupation of existing vacant buildings and brown field sites; and</p> <p>d) To target the reversal of rural decline in the core of small towns and villages through sustainable targeted measures that address vacant premises and deliver sustainable reuse and regeneration outcomes.</p>
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The repopulating of vacant residential properties in town and village centres can provide an opportunity to improve the vibrancy of towns and villages. Residential uses in town centres ensure that areas remain vibrant outside of traditional business hours and also ensure more sustainable living patterns, reducing the need for motorised transportation. Activating these vacant units and achieving effective density and consolidation is an objective of the Council and a requirement of both the NPF and RSES. Residential uses in town and village centre areas are discussed in greater detail in Section 5.2.2 of this Plan.

17.2.8 Addressing Depopulation

Depopulation is recognised as an issue in numerous towns and villages throughout the County, particularly in more peripheral areas. Clare County Council will work in coordination with local communities in towns and villages to address barriers to the revitalisation and growth in these areas.

Development Plan Objective: Addressing Depopulation	
CDP17.8	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To work in coordination with local communities in towns and villages to address barriers to revitalisation and growth in these areas.

17.2.9 Lands Identified as Areas On Which the Vacant Site Levy Can Apply

Under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 local authorities are required to produce a Vacant Sites Register, since 1 January 2017. This is a register of lands in the Council's administrative area that are suitable for housing but have not been put forward for development. Sites included on the register are subject to the Vacant Sites Levy. The levy is intended to encourage the development of vacant sites and to reduce land hoarding. The Vacant Sites Levy may be applied to all identified 'Regeneration' land and 'Residential' land in the land-use zonings of this Plan. 'Residential' land is identified as applying to the following zonings:

- Existing Residential; and
- Residential.

Regeneration of land and buildings in need of development and renewal throughout the County is a central objective of this Plan, as set out in Objective CDP17.10. In addition, ‘Regeneration Land’, as defined under the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, is identified as applying to the following zonings:

- Mixed Use;
- Neighbourhood Centres;
- Tourism; and
- University Zone.

The specifics of each land-use zoning objective are included in Chapter 19 of this Plan and should be read in association with this section. Clare County Council has implemented the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015, through the establishment of a Vacant Site Register, identifying sites to which a vacant site levy can be applied. The Council will proactively engage in identifying suitable vacant sites on lands zoned residential which meet the criteria for inclusion in the Vacant Site Register. This will be achieved through a focused application of the levy, facilitating sustainable urban development and bringing vacant sites and buildings in urban areas into beneficial use.

Development Plan Objective:	
Lands Identified as Areas On Which the Vacant Site Levy can Apply	
CDP17.9	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To identify areas for development and renewal that are in need of regeneration, in order to prevent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse effects on existing amenities in such areas, in particular as a result of the ruinous or neglected condition of any land; • Urban blight and decay; • Anti-social behaviour; or • A shortage of habitable houses or of land suitable for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses. <p>b) To implement, where appropriate, the provisions of the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015; and</p> <p>c) To facilitate the proportionate growth of appropriately designed development in rural towns that will contribute to their regeneration and renewal, through interventions in the public realm including the provision of amenities, the acquisition of sites and the provision of services.</p>

17.2.10 Derelict Sites

A Derelict Site is any land which detracts, or is likely to detract, to a material degree from the amenity, character or appearance of land in the neighbourhood of the lands in question. Derelict sites throughout the County are listed in the Derelict Sites Register. The Council recognises that derelict sites are damaging to the environmental and visual quality and amenity value of the areas in which they are located and that their improvement/upgrade is desirable. The Planning Authority will encourage the reuse of existing derelict sites where this will result in positive environmental, visual and amenity benefits for the town/village and will seek, where possible, to provide the framework within which improvement can take place.

Development Plan Objective: Derelict Sites	
CDP17.10	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To use all mechanisms available to it as appropriate and to work with Derelict Site owners to identify opportunities to bring derelict sites back in to use; b) To use the Derelict Sites Act 1990 where appropriate to require owners of derelict property to carry out suitable improvements, and to implement the provisions of the Act to prevent or remove injury to amenity arising from derelict sites; c) To prepare improvement plans and design briefs for larger derelict areas incorporating an Invasive Alien Species Management Plan if deemed necessary; and d) To seek to acquire properties which are appropriate to the Council's Capital Programme in order to carry out improvements to derelict sites and revitalise the surrounding areas in compliance with the objectives and requirements of the Habitats Directive and in a manner which protects other sites or habitats of national, regional or local importance.

17.2.11 Town Centre Infill Sites

The redevelopment of town and village centre infill sites has the potential to significantly contribute to the overall appearance of the surrounding area whilst also ensuring vitality and the beneficial reuse of town centre lands. These sites offer excellent development opportunities for compact growth in key locations and can be suitable for either commercial or residential development or a mixture of uses. However, their redevelopment can face challenges in terms of site area and the potential requirement to retain existing structures on site and the Council will liaise with the relevant stakeholders through mechanisms such as the pre planning consultation process to assist in resolving these issues.

Development Plan Objective: Town and Village Centre Infill Development	
CDP17.11	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To encourage and support the redevelopment of infill sites in town and village centres for residential, commercial or a mixture of uses; and b) To provide guidance to potential developers to support the reuse of key town and village centre infill sites.

17.2.12 Tidy Towns and Community Groups

The majority of the improvement and enhancement works that take place in the towns and villages is undertaken by communities across the County who carry out work throughout the year to enhance the appearance of their local areas. The strong spirit of volunteerism and community pride is evident for all to see and has helped to make County Clare an attractive visitor destination and place to live. There is a broad range of groups and organisations involved in promoting and enhancing the appearance of towns and villages in the County and their on-going work is reflected in the number of successes achieved in competitions such as Pride-of-Place, Entente Florale and Tidy Towns. Clare County Council acknowledges the extent of the work and pride taken in the enhancement of villages and towns across the County and will endeavour, over the lifetime of the Plan, and resources permitting, to provide guidance/advice to community groups involved in improving the appearance of their town/village. The Council will also work through the Local Economic and Community Plan and the Public Participation Network to support community groups working to improve their area.

Development Plan Objective: Community Activity	
CDP17.12	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>To encourage and support the work of community groups in the maintenance, enhancement and renewal of towns and villages across the County in line with CDP Objective 3.1.</p>



Chapter 18 Design and Placemaking

Goal XVIII: A county that promotes buildings, urban spaces and public realm of the highest quality and ensures all development adheres to the principles of good design and contributes to the establishment of distinctive buildings and areas with a ‘sense of place’.

Chapter 18 Table of Contents

18.0	Introduction
18.1	Strategic Aims
18.2	The Design Process
18.3	Strategy
18.3.1	The Importance of Place and the Public Realm
18.3.2	Urban Design
18.3.3	Placemaking and Amenity in Settlements
18.3.4	Place making and Amenity on the Wild Atlantic Way
18.3.5	Rural Design
18.3.6	Universal Design
18.3.7	Design Statements
18.4	Regulations and Guidelines
18.4.1	Energy Efficiency and Sustainability
18.5	Collaboration

18.0 Introduction

“The built environment influences every aspect of our lives, the houses we live in, the schools we learn in, the offices or factories we work in, the public buildings we enter, the places where we spend our leisure time and even the streets in which we move about. While few people think consciously about architecture, everyone experiences it. Good design contributes to our sense of well-being, both as individuals and as a community and has a positive role to play in mitigating social exclusion. Poor standards of design and construction represent a waste of effort, energy, materials and opportunity.”

The above quotation from Government Policy: Action on Architecture 2004, summarises the importance of design in the built environment. Achieving a good quality built environment is essential to ensure that County Clare is an attractive place to live, work and visit.

The built environment of County Clare ranges from the historic towns of Ennis, Ennistymon, Kilrush and Killaloe and the new town of Shannon to a variety of attractive smaller towns and villages. The built form is also evident in the countryside with an array of building types including farm buildings, houses, churches, schools and historic ruins. New places and buildings of all kinds will be constructed within this context and this ever-changing built environment will form the setting for people’s present and future lives.

18.1 Strategic Aims

In accordance with the overall Vision for the Plan, this Chapter is based on the following strategic aims:

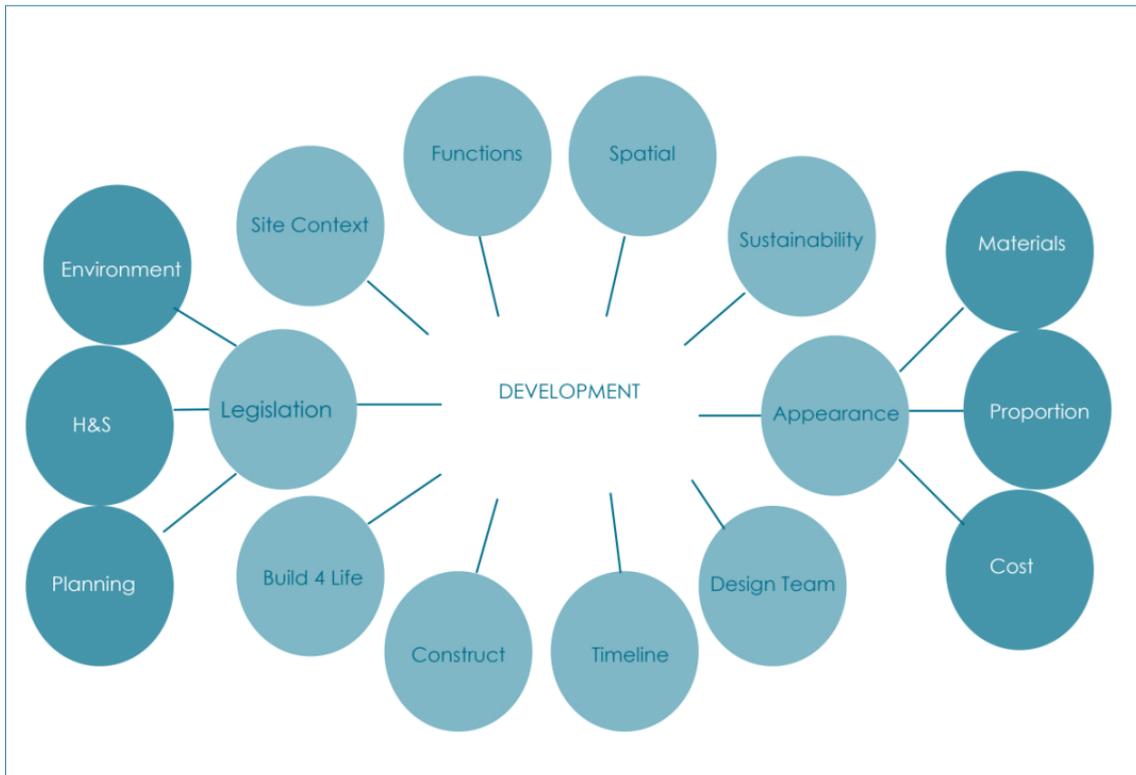
- To ensure that each structure or group of structures, whether in an urban or rural setting, will enhance the environment;
- To ensure that structures or groups of structures in urban areas are designed to create spaces between buildings which are attractive places for people to occupy;
- To ensure that structures or groups of structures in rural areas are designed to protect and enhance the quality of the landscape particularly in the case of extensions to, or reuse of, vernacular buildings; and
- To ensure that each structure or group of structures is designed and sited to maximise conservation of energy, water and resources and to facilitate flexible and sustainable use.

18.2 The Design Process

In urban areas it is mainly buildings which shape the environment, likewise in the countryside, buildings form part of the rural landscape. Whether a building or development is set in an urban or rural context, it has the ability to enhance that environment. A key tool in achieving the desired enhancement of the environment is the proper use of the design process.

Any development is essentially about translating an idea into reality and adequate preparation is required to ensure that the reality matches the idea. The development of projects, even those of limited scale, can be complex, given the range of inputs necessary. The diagram below suggests a typical set of factors that must be considered in the design process. These various elements must be reconciled and balanced if a project is to be successful in terms of enhancing the receiving environment.

Figure 18.1 Inputs to Development to be Managed Through the Design Process



The design process is a disciplined and methodical technique for finding solutions to complex inter-related issues as illustrated in Figure 18.1. The objective of the design process is to produce a building or development which is ‘fit for purpose’, and which meets many requirements including those of the end-user. The purpose of the development may vary for example a family home, a hotel, a medical centre or a mixed-use development containing shops, offices and apartments, however, the basic design process can be summarised as a three-stage process (complex projects may require additional sub stages) as outlined in Figure 18.2 below.

Figure 18.2 Basic Stages of Design Process: Survey, Analysis, Solution



The following are typical but non-exhaustive lists for the stages.

Stage 1 – Survey

This stage of information is often referred to as ‘The Brief’ and it needs to include all relevant issues which include:

- Adaptability;
- Accessibility;
- Budget;
- Carbon footprint;
- Civic aspect;
- Climate change adaptability;
- Functions (both private and public);
- Governing legislation;
- Psychological/emotional requirements;
- Resources;
- Spatial requirements;
- The number of users;
- The site; and
- Timeframe.

Stage 2 – Analysis

The analysis stage involves the processing of the information gathered at survey stage, the examination of the spatial relationships between issues, and the examination of circulation patterns, siting options, implications for character of area, construction options, planning considerations, costs and aesthetic priorities.

Stage 3 – Solution

Having carried out the analysis on the gathered information, stage 3 involves the progression to a ‘best fit’ solution. Once this is achieved the solution evolves through the resolution of competing issues and testing against the criteria established for the project. Bulk, scale, massing, proportion and other visual elements including materials are refined. After final refinements to ensure the proposal enhances its environment, the project is ready for the submission of the planning application.

In summary, analysis and fact gathering are essential initial steps in the design process which should logically precede moving to the final design. Unless this is understood, ‘design’ can be seen as just the outward appearance of the building based only on subjective opinion.

The preparation of a design statement at the culmination of the survey - analysis - solution process is highly important. The design statement can clearly convey the designer’s meaningful engagement with the three stages of the process and help the planner to understand the design rationale in an objective way.

A key element to be examined within the design process is the relationship of an individual building or development to the ‘Public Realm’ (also referred to as ‘Place’).

18.3 Strategy

18.3.1 The Importance of Place and the Public Realm

‘Place’ is that part of the external environment which people recognise, and which has significance for them. People visit places for functional reasons, for example home to be with family, church for service and a hotel for lunch. The quality of public space outside the building being visited can enhance the visitor’s experience. The objective of urban design is to enhance the experience of spaces outside buildings and to develop them into ‘places’ of character in their own right. ‘Place’ can also be a unique selling point of an area i.e. the special features and qualities that make it different from other ‘places’.

To support the delivery of its compact growth agenda the NPF targets the delivery of 30% of all new homes within the existing built-up footprint in the main urban settlements (NPO3(c)). The settlement plans for Ennis, the Service Towns and Small Towns, contained in Volume 3 of this Plan, provide for up to 30% growth within the existing built-up footprint where possible and the achievement of a successful public realm is of significant importance to ensure that these settlements are attractive places in which to live and work.

Although natural features often play a significant role, the physical and visual form of ‘place’ in urban areas is created principally from the enclosure of space by buildings. Spaces which are clearly defined tend to be memorable as places. For example, a street in a historic town such as Ennistymon, lined by buildings that form a ‘wall’ of facades on either side. A person in such a street, enclosed on both sides and unable to see beyond the facades because of the

height and width of the street, feels a very strong sense of place. However, in lower density developments such as suburban housing estates, creating a 'sense of place' can be challenging due to the distance of the viewer from the buildings. In such developments, there is weak 'enclosure' of their line of sight, therefore spatial definition needs to be achieved by a variety of other means.

Spatial definition is the first necessary step in creating a sense of place. However, the character of 'place' and the quality of the public realm is influenced by many other elements. In relation to towns and villages, public realm improvements will be focused on six key areas:

1. Quality of the Public Realm;
2. Sense of Place;
3. Placemaking;
4. Legibility and Wayfinding;
5. Permeability and Connectivity; and
6. Inclusivity and Universal Design.

This Plan aims to use these six defining qualities of successful urban places. These headings are derived from the 12 criteria set out in the Urban Design Manual – A Best Practice Guide (2009). The six headings have been tailored here to apply to sustainable urban design in general. The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets is also relevant and contains mandatory guidance in relation to these issues.

Quality of the Public Realm

A quality public realm is characterised by safe, secure and enjoyable public areas with well-defined and distinctive places and recognisable landmarks. A quality public realm will also have an appropriate selection of facilities, a good balance between pedestrians and vehicles, defined with quality materials and street furniture, and will incorporate trees and other natural elements. Clear definition between private, semi-private and public space is required using well designed boundaries and materials.

Sense of Place

Sense of Place refers to the personal perception of an area by individuals. The human experience of 'place' comes through the sense of sight. People react quickly to visual signals and can decide in seconds if the place they are in, or approaching, is attractive or off-putting. Subconscious reactions nevertheless influence choices and behaviour which can have real impacts, positive or negative, on the place in question. A positive reaction is more likely to result in people choosing to return to that place, whether to shop, attend community and cultural events or to do business, and can therefore play a key role in the sustainability of a settlement. Clare County Council is committed to enhancing public realm throughout the County and the preparation of the Ennis Public Realm Enhancement Scheme and the development of Shannon Town Park are two recent examples of this commitment.

Placemaking

Placemaking is implementing a vision to develop both a ‘Quality Public Realm’ and a ‘Sense of Place’ by attention to the containment of urban spaces, highlighting unique features, appropriate use of colour, use of good quality materials and street furniture, suitable tree planting and landscaping, dealing with visual clutter and appropriate traffic management. Successful placemaking is the result of multi-agency and multidisciplinary involvement and commitment. This approach is mandatory under the provisions of the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets.

Development Plan Objective: Sustainable Place Framework	
CDP18.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To support the development of a sustainable place framework to ensure the development of quality places through integrated planning and consistently excellent design. The role of education, learning and health in providing inclusive, dynamic and adaptable urban environments should be included and the importance of consultation with local communities is supported and recognised.

Legibility and Wayfinding

Legibility and wayfinding refers to the ease with which visitors can navigate a street network using visual cues such as buildings, landscape elements, materials and finishes. Distinctive landmarks at key locations, street furniture and variation to surfaces can greatly enhance the legibility of a town. The connections between the main facilities in a town or village should be clear. Junctions and roundabouts at the outer areas of towns can be lacking in visual features that offer a welcome and help to orientate the visitor by distinguishing one roundabout from another. A carefully chosen palette of materials can also give places a sense of identity i.e. where one area ends and another begins. It can also help to convey a hierarchy of place.

Permeability and Connectivity

Permeability and Connectivity refers to the degree to which an area has a variety of pleasant, convenient and safe routes through it. Urban areas are enriched when people use walking to move around. Walking is efficient, healthy and facilitates good social contact. Smaller ‘block’ sizes facilitate better permeability which is good for ‘walkability’. Research has shown that a lack of connectivity is one of the key factors that discourages people from walking. In less central areas where block sizes are larger, which adds significantly to walking times, pleasant and safe short cuts need to be provided in accordance with national guidance such as the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets to create good walkability.

Inclusivity and Universal Design

Inclusivity refers to how easily all people can access, understand and use the public realm regardless of age, size, gender, race, mental health or physical, sensory and intellectual ability or disability. In its broadest sense it means places can be positively enjoyed by people from all cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The public realm should be accessible to all by removing clutter and avoiding unnecessary barriers and changes in level. It should also be easy and logical to understand and navigate.

Development Plan Objective: Achieving Quality in the Public Realm	
CDP18.2	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To require both public and private developments to make a positive contribution to the public realm to ensure the creation of attractive, liveable, well designed, high quality urban places that are home to diverse and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and well-being;</p> <p>b) To require all proposals for developments in excess of 3 residential units or 300m² to be accompanied by a design statement demonstrating how the 12 criteria set out in the Best Practice Urban Design Manual have been addressed. A design statement may be required for smaller developments in instances where the proposed development is situated in a key location in the town or village (See also Appendix 1 Section A1.4.4 of this Volume); and</p> <p>c) To promote the use of Health Place Audits (HPA) and develop projects that support the creation of attractive, enterprise development friendly, liveable, well-designed, high quality places that are home to a diverse enterprise base mix and integrated communities that enjoy a high quality of life and wellbeing.</p>

New developments can only succeed in creating ‘place’ if the principles required are incorporated into their planning and design. These concepts are explained fully in government publications Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) and the Urban Design Manual: A Best Practice Guide and the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets 2012.

‘Place’ in rural areas is formed, physically and visually, by features of natural landscape, overlain with patterns of historic development. Traditional buildings of various types sit comfortably in the rural context providing landmarks. Public thoroughfares can themselves be ‘places’ of character, defined by boundaries of hedgerow, stone walls or low banks and trees. In visual terms, the character of the landscape is formed by a variety of shapes in informal patterns.

Figure 18.3 Visual Integration of Buildings to the Receiving Landscape



18.3.2 Urban Design

Good urban design should create places for people that are safe, comfortable, varied and attractive. New development should enrich the quality of existing spaces and a mixture of different building forms, uses, tenures and densities should provide vitality. The design of streets, for example, needs to strike the right balance between the different functions of the street, including a ‘sense of place’.

In terms of residential development in urban areas, housing developers, their design teams, the Planning Authority, and the community, share a common goal to create high quality places that:

- Prioritise walking, cycling and public transport and deliver a high quality of life;
- Incorporate the ‘Balance of Needs’ principle as set out in the National Disability Authority guidelines on Universal Design;
- Provide a good range of community and support facilities;
- Present an attractive well-maintained appearance with a distinct sense of place and a quality public realm which are easy to access, use and navigate;
- Promote the efficient use of land and energy;
- Provide a mix of land uses to minimise transport demand;
- Promote social integration; and
- Enhance and protect the built and natural heritage.

The Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets provides a statutory framework and guidance for key factors of best practice in the formation of public spaces. Design Guidelines are outlined in the government publications Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009) and its accompanying document Urban Design Manual - A best practice guide (2009). Also of relevance is the Department's guidance document Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities (2007). Furthermore, the National Cycle Framework 2009-2020 indicates that buildings for human occupancy should, in their design and layout, enable the creation of safe, efficient and attractive networks of cycle routes to promote active travel and reduce the dependence on the private car, especially in urban areas.

18.3.3 Placemaking and Amenity in Settlements

In the towns and villages across County Clare the main public spaces, in most cases, occur in the historic core of the settlement. Many of these spaces contain specific structures which have a protected status (either as Protected Structures or as part of an Architectural Conservation Area). These structures form part of the public spaces and places which themselves need to be valued. All work in these 'spaces between buildings' needs interdepartmental and stakeholder engagement.

Sites identified as Opportunity Sites (see Chapter 17 for further details) can, if properly developed, make an important contribution to the 'sense of place' of the town or village. While site specific enhancement objectives are detailed in the individual settlement plans contained in Volume 3 of this Plan, there are a number of overarching priorities that apply to all settlements. Masterplanning and technical assistance from the local authority will be necessary to achieve many of the following priorities.

Main Public Spaces

Priorities for the main public spaces in the towns and villages in County Clare are:

- To protect distinctive spaces by retaining, replacing and enhancing the defining elements* and edges particularly those between private and public space;
- To select lighting, bollards, seats, surface finishes and other street furniture in consultation with relevant designers;
- To examine the selective planting of appropriate trees to enhance and define spaces;
- To use materials of appropriate quality and limit visual clutter;
- To implement best practice in traffic management for all modes of transport;
- To ensure adequate signage and linkages to parking;
- To identify public/community transport stopping points;
- To examine causes of vacancy/dereliction;
- To promote infill street development of accessible 'step down' type homes, private or public;
- To improve access to buildings; enhance pedestrian mobility, crossing areas and comfort;

- To ensure the undergrounding of wires, particularly in historic areas, and upgrading ground surfaces;
- To consider use of co-ordinated painting schemes;
- To erect street names in consultation with the Council; and
- To implement the principles established in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS).

* Defining elements are buildings, walls, trees, hedges or other street furniture which form the visible edges of the space.

New Housing Areas

Priorities for the public realm in new housing areas are:

- Well-designed layouts forming attractive spaces appropriate to local character and scale;
- To avoid undefined set-backs where new housing abuts regional or local roads. These edges should be designed to enhance the public realm in character with the settlement;
- To ensure that suitable boundaries between public and private spaces, where defining elements give sufficient enclosure, are specified at planning application stage; and
- To plant at least one oak tree or other equivalent large deciduous indigenous tree species in a suitable location on public open space within a scheme.

Overall Settlement

Priorities for the public realm in the overall settlement are:

- To highlight unique heritage or other features;
- To enhance the sense of place at gateways and key junctions;
- To enhance permeability and to promote compact growth; and
- To form transition areas on approach roads, both to calm traffic and enhance the arrival to the settlement.

Gateways

Gateways are used to demarcate a point of arrival from one place to another. They are important placemaking tools as they form the first impression of a place. Gateways are also an important traffic-calming tool as they can be used to inform drivers of a change in driving conditions ahead.

Transition Zones

A Transition Zone refers to an area that may be needed for slowing vehicles when entering an urban area from a faster moving road, such as from a rural road into a city, town or village

or from a motorway into an integrated street network. Transitions Zones can be emphasised by:

- Applying transitional geometric measures, such as the narrowing of carriageways;
- Introducing measures that provide enclosure, such as large trees; and
- Applying changes to carriageway surfacing materials.

Development Plan Objective: Ten Minute Towns	
CDP18.3	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <p>a) To facilitate sustainable compact settlements with the ‘10-minute’ town concept, whereby, a range of community facilities and services are accessible in short walking and cycle timeframes from homes or are accessible by high quality public transport services by connecting people to larger scaled settlements delivering these services;</p> <p>b) To ensure that decision making in relation to new infrastructure to provide improved connectivity is informed by an appropriate level of environmental assessment and in accordance with CDP Objective 3.3 in Chapter 3; and</p> <p>c) To support the delivery of the Strategic Objectives of Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy in establishing Ennis as Ireland’s first ‘10-minute’ town.</p>

18.3.4 Place Making and Amenity Along Tourism Corridors

The Wild Atlantic Way and the Shannon Estuary Way are essentially routes with potential stopping-off points at the towns, villages and viewing points along the way. The road is the ‘place’ in this instance from which the coast and surrounding countryside is viewed. It follows that the roads along these need well-defined edges i.e. boundaries which are in character with the area, where setbacks are carefully tailored to the minimum required and are surfaced with locally occurring grasses.

The towns and villages on the Wild Atlantic Way and the Shannon Estuary Way need good gateways to calm traffic and to follow the guidelines above on edges and setbacks. Setbacks which become parking bays in front of large one-off sites in settlements have a negative visual impact on sense of place, facilitate vehicular speed, uncontrolled traffic movements and can impact on sightlines at entrances. Ideally the road or street, its width determined by DMURS movement function, should have its edge defined either by footpath or grass verge as appropriate to the settlement. This will help to manage speed and achieve self-regulating streets i.e. using ‘place’ to manage movement.

18.3.5 Rural Design

The challenge for new built form in the countryside is to fit comfortably into that ‘place’. In terms of new houses in the countryside, the County Clare Rural House Design Guide is a useful

reference. The Council will prepare a new rural house design guide within the lifetime of the Plan. Boundaries are important and a site design which places the house at an angle to the road can sometimes respond better to the rural setting. In particular, the sensitive refurbishment of existing buildings is welcomed. While vernacular cottages are smaller than the average single rural house, the combined area of the cottage and out-buildings is usually close to that size, making it feasible to refurbish a group of buildings as one residence (Figure 18.4).

Figure 18.4 Farm Building Renovation



Where an existing vernacular house is to be extended, a well designed contemporary extension may be a good option. The Government Policy on Architecture advise that ‘Contemporary architecture and design also have an important role to play in the design of rural buildings that make the best use of their location while still blending into and enhancing the natural landscape.’

18.3.6 Universal Design

‘Universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people, regardless of their age, size or disability. This includes public spaces in the built environment such as buildings, street or spaces that the public have access to; products and services provided in those places and systems that are available including information and communications technology (ICT)’ (Disability Act 2005).

Universal design is one of the key elements of the proper planning and sustainable development of any area. Clare County Council is committed to the principle of universal design, enabling all people to participate in a county that takes account of human differences and to interact with their environment to the best of their ability. Universal design is not a special requirement, for the benefit of only a minority of the population. It is a fundamental condition of good design. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits. In this way, sustainable design and universal design are inextricably linked. By considering the diverse needs and abilities of all throughout the design process, universal design creates products, services and environments that meet people’s needs. This

reflects the life-cycle approach, which should allow people to stay living longer in the community, ideally throughout their lifetime.

Development Plan Objective: Universal Design	
CDP18.4	It is an objective of the Development Plan: To require all new buildings, facilities and works to the public realm to meaningfully engage with the principles of universal design so that all environments and buildings can be accessed, understood and used by all persons to the greatest extent possible and to have regard to all existing relevant legislation, publications and guidelines in their design.

18.3.7 Design Statements

Following on from the design process, the preparation of a design statement is an important end product to demonstrate how a particular design solution has been chosen. It can provide a rationale for a particularly innovative design or demonstrate how the context of a particular setting has been taken on board or respected (See Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines, including Section A1.4.4, for further details).

18.4 Regulations and Guidelines

Regulations and guidelines covering a wide range of topics must now be considered in the preparation of any development proposal. These regulations are intended to improve conditions for owners, users and society at large by ensuring minimum acceptable standards. They have undoubtedly resulted in improvements in the areas of environment, health, safety, accessibility and energy performance. However, the use of regulations and guidelines in themselves does not result in a quality built environment and it is important to achieve a balance between all of these issues. In this regard, the Government Policy on Architecture 2004 advises:

‘Building Regulations set standards for structural safety, drainage, ventilation, stairways and similar matters. However, a building can comply with every regulation and still be ugly, inefficient and depressing. It may make poor use of space which has cost so much to build or it may degrade the landscape or townscape in which it sits.’

18.4.1 Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

Energy efficiency is about achieving the same result with less energy. Recognising the importance of energy efficiency, the Government has established ambitious targets. The national commitment requires a 30% reduction in carbon emissions between 2021 and 2030 and the development of a carbon neutral society in Ireland by 2050. This requires contributions from all sectors of the economy and will bring significant economic and environmental benefits.

In accordance with the carbon reduction measures outlined in Chapter 2 of this Volume, the proposed development of structures or groups of structures in urban and rural areas should achieve high energy efficiency both at construction stage and during the lifetime of the development. This can be achieved by climate sensitive design which takes account of the orientation, topography and surrounding features so as to control wind effects, while optimising the benefits of daylight and solar gain as well as the installation of renewable energy technologies such as solar panels, geo-thermal heating etc.

Structures should be designed so that they are comfortable, adaptable to changing needs, cost effective to build and economic to manage and maintain. In terms of protected structures and architectural conservation areas, it is the policy of the Council to incorporate these new technologies where it can be demonstrated that they can be satisfactorily integrated.

Development Plan Objective: Sustainable Developments	
CDP18.5	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To require all new developments to maximise energy efficiency and conservation and to ensure that they embrace the concept of sustainable design, achieve excellence in siting and design and promote the use of low carbon materials.

18.5 Collaboration

The Government Policy on Architecture 2009 recognises that good quality design is not easily achieved. It confirms the importance of effective collaboration between planners, architects, applicants and others in the team who may be involved in producing good design for the built environment.

Within the overall process of place-making, the boundaries of various disciplines overlap. Supporting sustainable place-making will take account of the economic, planning, architectural, engineering, environmental, landscape and community development challenges. Successful place-making depends on the effective management of the overlaps between disciplines. The Design Manual for Urban Streets and Roads recognises this and makes collaborative management and inter-disciplinary cooperation a statutory requirement.

The Council has recognised this process in the past through the Clare Design Awards Scheme which acknowledged the collaborative work of the client, architect and builder in bringing successful schemes to fruition. It is an objective of the Council to run a Design Awards Scheme to encourage excellence in the built environment during the lifetime of this Plan.



Development Plan Objective: Design and Built Environments	
CDP18.6	<p>It is an objective of Clare County Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) To encourage and facilitate excellence in the siting and design of new buildings in the county and particularly through contemporary and innovative architectural solutions;b) To encourage and facilitate high standards of energy efficiency;c) To facilitate and promote the use of appropriate low carbon materials in all future development and embrace the principles of sustainable design;d) To ensure the integration of safe and convenient alternatives to the car into the design of our communities, by prioritising walking and cycling accessibility to both existing and proposed developments, and integrating physical activity facilities for all ages; andd) To run a Design Awards Scheme to encourage excellence in the built environment.



Chapter 19 Land Use and Zonings

Goal XVIII: A county where the overall strategic objectives of the County Development Plan are translated into settlement plans and local area plans containing detailed land-use zonings and master-planning of neighbourhoods in an evidence-based, plan-led approach with a focus on ensuring a high quality of life.

Chapter 19 Table of Contents:

19.0	Introduction
19.1.	Strategic Aims
19.2	Context
19.3	Land Use Zoning
19.4.	Nature of Zonings
19.5	Indicative Land-Use Zoning Matrix

19.0 Introduction

The Clare County Development Plan 2023–2029 governs the overall land-use objectives for County Clare and establishes a policy framework within which the more detailed settlement plans contained in Volume 3 of this plan and local area plans for the Metropolitan and Key Towns can be prepared. The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended requires that a local area plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the development plan. The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is, therefore, the main policy document for land-use considerations within the functional area of Clare County Council.

Local area plans for the Key town of Ennis and its Environs and the Metropolitan town of Shannon will be prepared during the lifetime of this development plan.

19.1. Strategic Aims

In accordance with the overall vision, goals and Core Strategy of the Development Plan, the following outlines the strategic aims within which the settlement plans and local area plans will be prepared:

- To ensure that adequate land is zoned to meet the needs of the population of the county, in compliance with the Core Strategy and population targets;
- To ensure that sufficient land is zoned and serviced to provide for sustainable development and settlement growth throughout the county, in order to achieve the specified population targets of the Plan;
- To ensure that the land-use considerations in the settlement plans and local area plans are set within the policy framework of the County Development Plan;
- To ensure that social and physical infrastructure is developed in line with the growth of settlements in the county;
- To ensure that proposed developments are, where appropriate, directed to suitably zoned lands within designated settlement areas as provided for in the Plan.

19.2 Local Area Plans

The Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, requires that development plans comprise objectives for the zoning of lands for particular purposes, in the interest of proper planning and sustainable development. This is reflected in the settlement plans that have been prepared and are contained in Volume 3 of this development plan.

In terms of local area plans, the Act requires that a local area plan shall be consistent with the objectives of the Development Plan. A local area plan shall consist of a written statement and a plan (or plans) which may include:

- a) Objectives for the zoning of land for the use solely or primarily of particular areas for particular purposes, or
- b) Such other objectives in such detail as may be determined by the planning authority for the proper planning and sustainable development of the area to which it applies,

including detail on community facilities and amenities and on standards for the design of developments and structures.

Section 19 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended, states that a local area plan shall be made in respect of a town with a population that exceeds 1,500 persons except where, inter alia, a local area plan has already been made in respect of the area of the town or objectives for that area have already been indicated in the development plan.

It is a requirement under Section 19(2B) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended that no later than one year following the making of this Development Plan, the local area plans shall be amended so that their objectives are consistent with the objectives of this Clare County Development Plan 2023–2029. Where any provision of any local area plan conflicts with the provisions of this development plan, the provision of the local area plan shall cease to have effect.

Development Plan Objective: Local Area Plans	
CDP19.1	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that a local area plan is prepared and in place for the areas of Ennis & Environs and Shannon Town & Environs during the lifetime of this plan.

19.3 Land-Use Zoning

Within the functional area of County Clare, lands are zoned for particular purposes within the settlement plans contained in this development plan and in the Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan.

In accordance with the overall strategy of this plan, the County’s zoning strategy is based on three important principles:

- i. Sufficient lands should be provided at appropriate locations throughout the County, in accordance with the population and housing supply targets as set out in the Core Strategy, to facilitate the envisaged land-use requirements during the lifetime of this plan;
- ii. Sustainable development and the use/redevelopment of brown field sites within established settlements which should accommodate 30% of their allocated growth;
- iii. Land-use zoning objectives should assist individuals in accessing the most appropriate location for new development. Not all needs can be anticipated and therefore some flexibility is required, having regard to all other principles, policies and objectives.

Development Plan Objective: Zoning of Lands	
CDP19.2	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that sufficient lands are zoned at appropriate locations in the settlement plans and local area plans of the County, in accordance with the Core Strategy population and housing targets, in order to meet the envisaged land use requirements of the area during the lifetime of this development plan.

19.4. Nature of Zonings

At the outset, it should be noted that a development proposal that complies, in principle, with the relevant land-use zoning, will not automatically be guaranteed or granted planning permission. Clare County Council shall consider each proposal for development on its individual merits having regard to Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.

The following describes the individual zonings proposed in each of the settlement plans/local area plans:

Agriculture

This zone is for the use of land for agricultural purposes and farming-related activities and to preserve the amenity of the town or village setting. Individual dwellings for permanent occupancy of established landowners (i.e. within family ownership for the preceding 10 years) and their immediate family members will be open for consideration subject to normal site suitability considerations.

Immediate family members would include:

- Parents
- Children
- Siblings

Airport

Land zoned for airport development shall be used for airport-related uses, buildings, infrastructure and services and compatible aviation-related businesses and industries.

Buffer Space

Buffer spaces are intended to provide a buffer of undeveloped land for the conservation of biodiversity, visual amenity or green space. Buffer spaces may include natural features such as floodplains, riparian zones, turloughs, valuable biodiversity areas including designated sites, amenity areas, woodlands, hedgerows, green spaces and archaeological features.

Commercial

The use of land zoned for 'commercial' purposes shall be taken to include the use of the lands for commercial and business uses including offices, service industry, warehousing and the facilitation of enterprise/retail/office type uses as appropriate. Retail Warehousing is open for consideration under this zoning, provided that a sequential test is carried out and the lands are demonstrably the optimum location for the nature and quantum of retail development proposed.

Neighbourhood Centre

It is intended that land zoned for 'neighbourhood centre' will be developed to provide an appropriate range of local services including commercial, retail and community uses, to support the population of the surrounding area.

Community

The development of lands for community uses shall be taken to include the use of lands for community, civic, health services, public or educational uses including the provision of schools, community halls, healthcare facilities and any other facility that is intended to provide some form of community service. A service may be delivered by either a public, community or private body.

Enterprise

Lands zoned for 'enterprise' shall be taken to include the use and development of land for high end research and development, business science and technology-based industry, financial services, call centres/telemarketing, software development, data centres, enterprise and incubator units, small/medium manufacturing or corporate office in high quality campus/park type development.

It is intended that such developments will have high quality architectural design and landscaping. This zoning allows for 'walk to' support facilities such as canteen, restaurant or crèche services which are integrated into employment units and are of a nature and scale to serve the needs of employees on the campus.

This zoning also allows for associated power generating infrastructure as well as transportation infrastructure such as car and bicycle parking and bus stop shelters. This zoning excludes general retail, retail park outlets, motor sales/servicing activities and heavy industrial undertakings.

Lands zoned for 'enterprise' in large villages and small villages shall be taken to include the use and development of land for small-scale business and enterprise development such as incubator units, craft centres/workshops, small-scale manufacturing, local digital/ technology business etc. Retail use on these sites shall only be considered where it is ancillary to the main activity taking place.

Enterprise developments in large villages and small villages must have a high standard of architecture and landscaping and must be relative and appropriate to the scale, size and character of the settlement in which they are planned to be located.

Existing Residential

The objective for land zoned 'existing residential' is to conserve and enhance the quality and character of the areas, to protect residential amenities and to allow for small scale infill development which is appropriate to the character and pattern of development in the immediate area and for uses that enhance existing residential communities. Existing residential zoned land may also provide for small-scale home-based employment uses where the primary residential use will be maintained.

Industry

The use of land for industry uses shall be taken to include the use for industrial processing or manufacturing of a scale and nature where there is significant goods manufacturing and related uses. Uses of this nature may result in the generation of emissions.

This type of industrial activity may also be subject to the SEVESO Directives, the main EU legislation dealing with the control of on-shore major accident hazards involving dangerous substances.

A mix of uses such as office-based or retail development is not considered appropriate in areas zoned for industrial development.

Light Industry

The use of land for light industry shall be taken to include uses where the primary activity is the manufacture of a physical product. The use for industry/manufacturing, incubator units, distribution, open storage, transport operating centres and the treatment/recovery of waste material is acceptable.

Processes carried out, or the machinery/plant installed on land zoned for Light Industry must be such that they could be carried out or installed in a residential area without detriment to the amenity of that area by reason of noise, vibration, smell, fumes, smoke, soot, ash, dust or grit.

Uses such as retail development or small/medium office-based developments are not considered appropriate in areas zoned for light industry, save where it is ancillary to the main use of the development. Large-scale office type development (>1000m²) such as call centres are open to consideration subject to compatibility with surrounding land uses.

Low Density Residential

This zoning refers to the use of lands to accommodate a low density pattern of residential development, primarily detached family dwellings. The underlying priority shall be to ensure that the character of the settlement/area is maintained and further reinforced by a high standard of design. Proposed developments must also be appropriate in scale and nature to the areas in which they are located.

Marine-Related Industry

Land zoned for marine-related industry provide for marine-related industry and large-scale uses that create a synergy with the marine use. Marine-related industry shall be taken to include the use of land for industry that, by its nature, requires a location adjacent to estuarine/deep water including a dependency on marine transport, transshipment, bulk cargo or where the industrial processes benefit from a location adjacent to the marine area.

Maritime/Harbour

The use of land for maritime/harbour related activity shall be taken to include the use of land, including harbours and piers, that will facilitate small-scale, water-based commercial or tourism activity and associated facilities including carparking facilities.

Mixed Use

The use of land for 'mixed use' developments shall include the use of land for a range of uses, making provision, where appropriate, for primary and secondary uses e.g. commercial/retail development as the primary use with residential development as a secondary use. Secondary uses will be considered by the local authority having regard to the particular character of the given area.

On lands that have been zoned 'mixed-use' in or near town or village centres, a diverse range of day and evening uses is encouraged and an over-concentration of any one use will not normally be permitted.

Open Space

It is intended that lands zoned 'open space' will be retained as undeveloped open space, mainly for passive open space related activities. The open space/park areas could contain active play facilities such as children's play areas, but these should only be a small component of the overall areas involved.

Recreation

This category of zoning provides for the use of land for the provision of sports grounds/playing pitches, golf courses, tennis courts and other active indoor and outdoor recreational facilities that contribute to meeting the leisure, recreation and amenity needs of the immediate community and/or the wider area.

Residential

Residential use shall be taken to primarily include the use of land for domestic dwellings. It may also provide for a range of other uses particularly those that have the potential to foster the development of new residential communities e.g. schools, crèches and open spaces

Strategic Residential Reserve

Strategic Residential Reserve lands have been identified across serviced settlements to facilitate longer term growth needs across the county. These lands comprise infill or contiguous sites or in some cases there is an on-site planning history of residential use. These lands are considered as the most appropriate site for the long-term sequential expansion of the relevant settlement. These Strategic Residential Reserve lands, in general, will not be brought forward for development within this plan period, with the following exceptions:

1. Non-residential development that is considered to be appropriate to the site context.
2. In addition to protecting these lands for the long-term expansion of these settlements, consideration may be given to the development of some of the strategic residential reserve lands before the end of the current plan period. The residential development of such lands will only be considered from the beginning of year four of the Plan (April 2027) in order to give an opportunity for zoned land to be brought forward for development. It will also be a requirement that the proposed 'Strategic Residential Reserve' lands can be serviced and can offer a reasonable substitute in terms of being delivered within the lifetime of the plan and are sequential lands within the settlement with good connectivity and access to services and amenities.

In its assessment of such proposals, the Planning Authority must be satisfied that the development of residential zoned land is progressing faster than expected and a shortage of available lands may arise or that residential zoned land is not being brought forward as expected and a shortage may arise which would hinder the delivery of residential units to meet demand during the plan period. The assessment will also be subject to compliance with the Core Strategy, and that the development permitted will not prejudice the future use of the remaining Strategic Residential Reserve lands for the longer-term growth needs of the plan area.

Tourism

Land zoned for tourism development shall be used for a range of structures and activities which are primarily designed to facilitate tourism development and where uses are mainly directed at servicing tourists/holiday makers and visiting members of the public.

Transport Utilities

It is intended that land zoned 'transport utilities' will be reserved for the provision of infrastructure required to move people and goods by rail, bus, car or bicycle including existing and proposed train stations, bus stations and coach parks.

University Zone

It is intended that lands identified as ‘University Zone’ will be reserved to accommodate development and uses associated with higher education including research and development, student/campus accommodation, residential uses complementary to the uses contained within the University Zone, student support services, enterprise/start-up business units, commercial units linked to the research and development role, recreation, sport and social facilities and open spaces. This zoning is suitable for designation as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ).

Utilities/Infrastructure Safeguard

It is intended that land zoned ‘utilities’ and ‘infrastructure safeguard’ will be reserved for the existing and future provision of key infrastructural services and the upgrading of existing services and infrastructure relating to road, rail, air, electricity, telecommunications, gas, water and wastewater treatment services.

Development Plan Objective: Compliance with Zoning	
CDP19.3	It is an objective of Clare County Council: To require development proposals to comply with the zoning of the subject site in settlement plans and local area plans.

19.5 Indicative Land-Use Zoning Matrix

Appendix 2 outlines the Indicative Land Use Zoning Matrix for the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029. This matrix provides an indication as to how different types of development may be considered on the different land-use zonings by listing the most common forms of development and classifying whether the proposed use is acceptable in principle, or otherwise, on lands that are zoned for a particular use.

19.5.1 ‘Permitted in Principle’

‘Permitted in Principle’ means that the proposed use is generally acceptable subject to the normal planning process and compliance with relevant policies, objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County Development Plan and with the guidance of other government bodies where appropriate and subject to its being in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. If a proposal is indicated to be ‘Permitted in Principle’ in the zoning matrix, this does not imply that planning permission will automatically be granted as other factors must be considered and each proposal for development is considered on its individual merits.

19.5.2 ‘Open for Consideration’

The proposed use may be permitted where the local authority is satisfied that it is in compliance with the zoning objectives, standards and requirements as set out in the County

Development Plan and with the guidance of other government bodies where appropriate, and will not conflict with the permitted, existing or adjoining land-uses in subject to its being accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

19.5.3 'Not Normally Permitted'

The proposed use will not normally be favourably considered by the local authority, except in exceptional circumstances, and in such instances, the development may represent a material contravention of the plan. This may be due to envisaged negative impacts on existing and permitted uses, incompatibility with policies and objectives contained in the County Development Plan or it may be contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

19.5.4 Uses Not Listed in the Indicative Zoning Matrix

Proposed land-uses which are not listed in the indicative land-use zoning matrix will be considered on a case-by-case basis having regard to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area and compliance with the relevant policies and objectives, standards and requirements as set out in this Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, guidelines issued in accordance with Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended and guidance issued by other government bodies.

19.5.5 Non-conforming Uses

'Non-conforming uses' are established uses that do not conform to the zoning objectives of the Plan. Generally, the Council will consider reasonable extensions and improvements to premises that accommodate non-conforming uses, provided that it would not be injurious to the amenities of the area and is consistent with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.



Chapter 20 Implementation and Monitoring

Goal XIX: A county that implements and monitors the county level implementation of the National Planning Framework, Regional Spatial Economic Strategy, national plans and guidelines to ensure, quality of life, sustainability, climate action, resilience and inclusivity are the fundamental principles in the future sustainable development of our County.

Chapter 20 Table of Contents:

- 20.0 Introduction
- 20.1 Implementation and Monitoring
- 20.2 Plan Evaluating and Reporting
- 20.3 Environmental Monitoring and SEA
- 20.4 Implementation and Monitoring Framework

20.0 Introduction

Under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended, Clare County Council has a statutory obligation to secure the implementation of the objectives of the Clare County Development Plan. Clare County Council is fully committed to implementing this development plan. The Council will take a leadership role to progress and secure the development plan policies and objectives.

In providing this leadership role, the Council will foster a collaborative approach with citizens, stakeholders, elected members, sectoral interest groups and adjoining authorities. The Council will seek to co-operate with the relevant agencies to facilitate, encourage and promote development, economic growth and employment in an environmentally suitable and practical manner across the County.

One of the most important aspects of this County Development Plan is to secure the timely delivery of critical physical infrastructure, primarily in the water services sector. The provision of a good quality water supply and effective wastewater disposal infrastructure are critical requirements for the future economic development, quality of life and sustainable growth of the County. The provision of adequate infrastructural capacity in areas of population growth, as identified in the Settlement Strategy, will allow for the plan-led future development of County Clare. The Council recognises that, in order to ensure land-use policy is sustainable and for the development plan strategy to be realised, a coordinated and integrated approach to planning the provision of public utility services is crucial.

Having regard to best practice, the County Development Plan sets out a formal framework for the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Objectives of the Plan and for measuring outcomes. The framework incorporates a blended approach to the assessment of the Objectives incorporating quantitative targets such as the number of planning applications and housing completions, as well as a qualitative approach which will assess the value and quality of planning outcomes over the course of successive County Development Plans.

20.1 Implementation and Monitoring

The implementation and monitoring framework for the Plan is set out in Appendix 9. The framework reflects the Vision for the County Development Plan (see Section 1.5) and the Strategic Development Plan Principles that support its delivery (see Figure 20.1). The Vision and Strategic Development Plan Principles are broadly aligned with the Regional Strategic Outcomes of the RSES, the National Strategic Outcomes of the NPF, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The implementation and monitoring framework categorises key Objectives in terms of their contribution towards the achievement of the Strategic Development Plan Principles. Many of the Objectives are multi-faceted and as such contribute to the achievement of multiple Strategic Development Plan Principles, which themselves are interrelated. Objectives are

assessed in terms of means of implementation and key performance indicators to monitor and evaluate the delivery of the Objective.

While every effort has been made to formulate Objectives in the Plan that are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound), not all Objectives can be measured in this way. Many relate to development management processes which are implemented through established internal systems and procedures. Others are part of multi-faceted decision-making processes that must balance the requirements of several Objectives against site-specific circumstances. Others again facilitate and support an intended outcome, rather than act as a direct means of delivering the outcome.

It should be noted that the implementation of these Objectives, and the delivery of desired planning outcomes, is subject to a range of external factors, most notably wider economic circumstances and availability of resources. Despite these limitations, the implementation and monitoring framework strives, where possible, to align the most relevant indicators that reflect and measure whether an Objective is being achieved.

Strategic Development Plan Principles for County Clare		
1.	Quality of life	Where urban and rural communities enjoy a high quality of life, work practice choice and service access;
2.	Sustainability	A county of creativity, culture, heritage, tourism and environmental management;
3.	Climate Action	A national leader in climate action;
4.	Resilience	A dynamic, resilient, internationally connected and competitive location for innovation and investment;
5.	Inclusivity	A place to be part of and proud of.

Figure 20.1 Strategic Development Plan Principles for County Clare

20.2 Plan Evaluating and Reporting

The implementation and monitoring framework will function as a formal feedback loop, and through ongoing evaluation and reporting will provide the evidence base for the formulation and refinement of future planning policy, including subsequent County Development Plans. The framework will assist the Planning Authority in meeting its statutory reporting requirements including:

- The 2 Year Progress Report of the County Development Plan (as required under Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended). This is a full report on the implementation of the objectives of the Plan and will be prepared two years after the Plan comes into effect. This report will highlight any difficulties that may arise in the

achievement of the objectives and give an opportunity to rectify any problems that may be identified; and

- Report to the Regional Assembly setting out progress made in supporting objectives of the RSES (as required under Section 25A (1) of the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended).

The Council will identify and adopt a continuous monitoring and management process, which will ensure that housing provision and analysis of housing need is both current and accurate throughout the period of the plan. It is important to undertake continuous monitoring of the implementation of the Clare County Council Housing Strategy and Housing Need and Demand Assessment 2023-2029, and any subsequent strategy, to ensure that identified needs are met.

20.3 Environmental Monitoring and SEA

Monitoring is an important part of the planning process, in order to identify the extent to which the plan aims and objectives are being met, and to gauge their effectiveness in achieving associated outcomes. Continual monitoring of the County Development Plan is required to ensure that the development objectives and policies are working, and to ensure that vision and overall strategy remain appropriate.

A Strategic Environmental Assessment has been prepared in tandem with the County Development Plan to assess the likely significant effects of the policies and objectives, and their implementation over the plan period. The SEA Directive requires that monitoring should be carried out in order to identify at an early stage any unforeseen adverse effects due to the implementation of the plan, with a view of taking remedial action where adverse effects are identified through monitoring.

While the monitoring framework set out in this chapter incorporates some monitoring of environmental related Objectives, an environmental monitoring programme has been developed as part of the SEA. It is based on environmental indicators which have been developed to show changes attributable to the plan and which have been selected to track progress towards achieving strategic environmental objectives and reaching targets, thereby enabling positive and negative impacts on the environment to be measured. Depending on monitoring results, adjustments to targets and indicators may be made to ensure the continued effectiveness of the monitoring programme in the interest of optimal environmental protection.

Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines

Appendix 1 Table of Contents

A1.0	Introduction
A1.1	Pre-Application Consultations
A1.2	Climate Action and Energy
A1.2.1	Built Environment
A1.2.2	Energy Efficiency and Sustainability
A1.2.3	Renewable Energy
A1.2.4	Distributed Heating
A1.3	Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure
A1.3.1	Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
A1.3.2	Habitat Directive Assessment
A1.3.3	Green Infrastructure within Industrial and Enterprise Zones
A1.4	Residential Development
A1.4.1	Rural Residential Development
A1.4.2	Urban Residential Development
A1.4.3	Childcare Facilities in Residential Areas
A1.4.4	Design Statements
A1.5	Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SuDS)
A1.6	Transport and Movement
A1.6.1	Cycle Routes, Footpaths and Roads
A1.6.2	Sight Distances
A1.6.3	Bicycle and Vehicle Parking Standards
A1.6.4	Traffic Impact Assessments (TIA), Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments
A1.6.5	Access and Mobility
A1.7	Signage
A1.7.1	Signage – General
A1.7.2	Advertising Signage
A1.7.3	Directional Signage
A1.7.4	Tourism Signage
A1.7.5	Advertising Hoardings (including billboards)
A1.7.6	Temporary Construction Hoarding/Safety Netting
A1.7.7	Signage at Petrol Stations
A1.8	Agricultural Developments
A1.9	Archaeological Heritage
A1.10	Monetary Requirements
A1.10.1	Development Contributions
A1.10.2	Cash Deposits and Bonds

A1.0 Introduction

In the assessment of a planning application the Planning Authority is required to consider the proper planning and sustainable development of an area, having regard to the matters provided for in Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). Section 34 sets out the issues that must be considered by Planning Authorities when making a decision on a planning application. These issues include the provisions of the relevant development plan, Section 28 Ministerial Guidelines, other relevant Ministerial or Government policies and any submissions or observations made in accordance with the Planning Regulations.

The development management guidelines as set out in this Appendix provide guidance and assistance to those who seek planning permission for development and support and inform the implementation of the Objectives of this Plan. They promote high standards of development in the county and the holistic assessment of developments having regard to issues which include amenity impacts, community considerations, climate change, economic, environmental, flood risk, heritage, quality of life and safety issues.

This Appendix should be read in conjunction with the other relevant chapters of the Development Plan and regard should also be had for the wide array of guidelines issued by the Minister under Section 28 of the Act. The development management guidance set out hereunder is not exhaustive and is not intended to replicate advice and guidelines available elsewhere. It is envisaged that these guidelines will be applied in a flexible manner, and it should not be assumed that adherence with the standards and criteria set out hereafter will automatically entitle an applicant to planning permission.

A1.1 Pre-Application Consultations

The planning process can be complex and difficult to understand, particularly for those who may be unfamiliar with the system. The purpose of pre-application consultations is to afford the opportunity to a potential applicant for planning permission, to seek advice from the Planning Authority on the proposed development. The Council, in accordance with Section 247 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended), provides an opportunity for applicants to engage in discussions with the Planning Authority prior to making a planning application. Applicants are encouraged to avail of this service to ensure that all key issues are addressed at the formative stage of the design process. It should, however, be noted that such discussions will not prejudice any subsequent decision made by Clare County Council.

A1.2 Climate Action & Energy

A1.2.1 Built Environment

The Planning Authority will encourage the repair, retrofitting and reuse of buildings in preference to their demolition and reconstruction where possible (refer to Objective CDP4.17 in Chapter 4 in relation to the replacement of a substandard habitable house in the

countryside). Where this cannot be achieved, the Planning Authority will support the use of sustainably sourced building materials and the reuse of demolition and excavated materials. See also Criteria 5 of the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government 'Urban Design Manual' (2009). The Planning Authority will support the use of structural materials that have low to zero embodied energy and CO2 emissions.

Buildings should be adaptable in design (refer to Criteria 9 of the 'Urban Design Manual' 2009 in the case of residential developments and Objective CDP5.11 'Lifelong Housing' in Chapter 5 of this Volume). Buildings should also be designed to minimise resource consumption, reducing waste, water and energy use. Innovative design and layout which provides natural ventilation incorporating design elements such as brise-soleil, green roofs, green walls and sustainable urban drainage solutions, landscaping using native trees and planting which enhances the natural biodiversity of the area is promoted where feasible.

An Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement should be included for all large scale commercial and residential applications. These statements should outline how the proposed development will address:

- a) Energy efficiency target & standards;
- b) Renewable energy targets and standards;
- c) Climate change mitigation measures;
- d) Climate change adaptation measures;
- e) The sustainable re-use or re-distribution of waste heat/energy on-site.

A1.2.2 Energy Efficiency and Sustainability

The options for minimising the use of energy through design, insulation, specification and for producing energy from renewable sources should be examined together with passive measures, for example, site orientation and plan layout. The principle national advisory body in this area is Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) www.sei.ie. Their website gives access to general and specific information on renewable energy from solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal and biomass. They produce a range of publications which can provide guidance on renewable energy for building developers and owners. The Limerick Clare Energy Agency www.lcea.ie is a useful source of advice locally.

A1.2.3 Renewable Energy

The Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) includes planning exemptions for renewable energy technologies below certain thresholds and in different site contexts, for example commercial and residential. For renewable energy developments outside of these exemptions planning permission is required and the Planning Authority will assess such development proposals on a case by case basis, having regard to current Government policy and Ministerial Guidelines, the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy (Appendix 5), the Clare Wind Energy Strategy (Appendix 6), the relevant Objectives contained in this Plan, site specific circumstances, the content of the submissions and observation received and other planning and environmental considerations.

In relation to utility-scale solar energy applications, any pre-application discussion and/or planning application proposal for solar farm development in the vicinity of the strategic national road network shall include a Glint and Glare Assessment.

A1.2.4 Distributed Heating

Pending the issuing of a National Policy Framework for District Heating, the Planning Authority will support and facilitate the use of recoverable heat sources and will encourage larger scale developments to consider future proofing to facilitate the future development of potential district heating, waste heat recovery and utilisation and the use of clean energy technologies.

A1.3 Natural Heritage, Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure

A1.3.1 Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)

The requirement to carry out an Environmental Impact Assessment derives from EU Directives 2014/52/EU (The new EIA Directive) which amends the preceding Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment. The original EIA Directive (85/337/EEC) has been amended four times since its entry into force, progressively updating and expanding the breadth of its application. An Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR) is required with a planning application where the defined thresholds outlined in Schedule 5 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) are exceeded for certain types of development. If the proposed development is sub-threshold, and the Planning Authority considers that the proposal is likely to have significant effects on the environment, then an EIAR must be submitted to the Planning Authority. The Planning Authority will have regard to Schedule 7 of the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended) in deciding whether a proposed development is likely to have significant effects on the environment, and also the supporting Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Guidance for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out Environmental Impact Assessment (August 2018) regarding Sub-Threshold Development. This would occur where it is considered that the effects of the proposed development may have a significant impact on the receiving environment.

Since the implementation of the new EIA Directive which came into force on the 23rd of May 2017 there have also been a number of additions such as the facility whereby a potential developer can request a Screening Determination and also a Scoping opinion from the planning authority. A person who is making an EIA application may ask the relevant planning authority to state in writing their opinion as to the scope and level of detail of the information to be provided in the environmental statement (a 'scoping opinion').

In addition, developers must ensure that the EIA report is prepared by competent experts. Recital (33) provides that experts involved in the preparation of EIA reports should be qualified and competent.

Competent authorities must have, or have access to, sufficient expertise to examine the EIA report. The competent authority may seek any supplementary information that it requires which is directly relevant to reaching a reasoned conclusion on the significant effects of the project on the environment. Recital (33) provides that ‘sufficient expertise, in the relevant field of the project concerned, is required for the purpose of its examination by the competent authorities in order to ensure that the information provided by the developer is complete and of a high level of quality.’

A1.3.2 Habitat Directive Assessment

In accordance with the EU Habitats Directive any plan or project with the potential to impact on the integrity of a European site must be Screened for Appropriate Assessment to determine if an appropriate assessment of the site is required. In the event that the screening indicates that the plan or project will, either directly or indirectly, on its own or in combination with other plans and projects, have a significant effect on a European site(s), a Natura Impact Statement (NIS) or Natura Impact Report (NIR) must be prepared.

Having considered the conclusions of the NIS or NIR, the competent authorities shall agree to the plan or project if they are satisfied that it will not adversely affect the integrity of the site concerned. It should be noted that the conservation objectives for some protected sites not only require the maintenance of favourable conservation condition but also the restoration of favourable conservation conditions of the qualifying interests.

If the NIS or NIR indicates that the subject site hosts a priority natural habitat type and/or a priority species, and the proposed development will have a significant negative impact on that habitat or species, the plan or project can only proceed if there are Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest (IROPI), including those of a social or economic nature in line with Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive. In such cases, the Member State shall take all compensatory measures necessary to ensure that the overall coherence of the Natura 2000 network is protected. It shall inform the European Commission of the compensatory measures adopted and await the opinion of the Commission regarding the proposed plan or project. Any such project or plan which is identified as having adverse effects on the integrity of a European site and has made the case for IROPI should be guided by the European Commission’s guidance on the application of Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive^[1].

If a development site is located on or near a European site, or the proposed development may have an impact on a European site, it is advisable to consult with the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. The National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage may also be consulted, including via <http://www.npws.ie/planning>.

[1]

http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/management/docs/art6/guidance_art6_4_en.pdf

In line with current planning policy, Clare County Council, as the planning authority, should seek to ensure that all proposals achieve 'no net loss' of biodiversity as a minimum outcome. The Planning Authority, in assessing proposals must adopt the No Net Loss principle with respect to Biodiversity across the county. The Planning Authority will take actions to both protect and enhance biodiversity across the county in line with the requirements of the National Biodiversity Action Plan, the Biodiversity Climate Adaptation Plan, the County Clare Biodiversity Plan and the Clare County Council Biodiversity Manual, Biodiversity Best Practice Guidelines for Clare County Council. No net loss of biodiversity, in essence, refers to the point where biodiversity gains from targeted conservation activities match the losses of biodiversity due to the impacts of a specific development, so that there is no net reduction overall in the type, amount and condition (or quality) of biodiversity over space and time.

A 'net gain' means that biodiversity gains exceed a specific set of losses. The result is a positive outcome for biodiversity rather than just keeping things the same by preventing loss or damage.

A1.3.3 Green Infrastructure within Industrial and Enterprise Zones

Lands that have been zoned for industrial or enterprise use need not be devoid of biodiversity or amenity opportunities. The retention and enhancement, where possible, of existing natural features such as hedgerows and associated ditches and streams in such zoned lands offers the potential to incorporate sustainable drainage measures and retain wildlife corridors through developments. The addition of surface water attenuation ponds, green roofs, sustainable parking (solar powered to provide lighting and to feed into the grid, porous paving and effective management and/or re-use of surface water run-off) together with living walls in these developments would transform an environment which would normally be perceived to be devoid of biodiversity into one which offers significant opportunities for wildlife while providing a high quality environment for its workers.

A1.4 Residential Development

A1.4.1 Rural Residential Development

Siting and Design

The Planning Authority wishes to achieve a high standard of house design and siting in the countryside. The Council has prepared the County Clare Rural House Design Guide to assist those making an application for a new dwelling or an extension to an existing dwelling in the rural area of the county. Whilst each rural site is unique and therefore these guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive, the principles are likely to be relevant in most contexts and applicants and agents are encouraged to use it as a reference document.

Road Frontage

Where a site has a public road frontage, a minimum frontage of 30 metres is normally required. This requirement may be relaxed in instances where it is desirable to maintain existing boundary features or landscape features, or for backland sites on private roads, on a case-by-case basis. Proposals are required to demonstrate that there are no negative residential or visual amenity/landscape impacts.

Plot Size

The minimum site area of 0.2ha (0.5acres) is required to accommodate a rural dwelling.

Wastewater Treatment Systems

Where connection to the public wastewater network is not available, the Planning Authority, in assessing proposals with on-site wastewater treatment systems, must be satisfied that site conditions are suitable for the treatment and disposal of domestic effluent.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (p.e \leq 10) 2021 provides an overall framework of best practice in relation to the development of wastewater treatment and disposal systems, in unsewered areas, for protection of our environment and specifically water quality. The Code replaces previous guidance issued by the EPA on wastewater treatment systems for single houses and sets out the following which will be used by Clare County Council when assessing on-site effluent treatment system proposals:

- An assessment methodology for the determination of site suitability for an on-site wastewater treatment system and identification of the minimum environmental protection requirements. All proposals shall be accompanied by a site suitability assessment in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) code;
- A methodology for the selection of a suitable wastewater treatment system for sites in unsewered areas. All proposals shall be accompanied by the site-specific details from the manufacturer of the system;
- Information on the design and installation of conventional septic tank systems, filter systems and mechanical aeration systems;
- Information on secondary treatment systems receiving septic tank effluent including filter systems and constructed wetlands as well as information on secondary packaged wastewater treatment systems receiving raw wastewater.
- Information on tertiary treatment systems;
- Information on construction and installation for the above systems as well as maintenance requirements for the above systems together with written proof of an agreed maintenance contract with the manufacturer of the system to ensure on-going maintenance; and

- All effluent treatment systems shall be designed and maintained in accordance with the EPA publication, The Code of Practice: Domestic Waste Water Treatment Systems (p.e ≤ 10) 2021 or any updated version.

Replacement Dwellings

The Planning Authority has a preference for the deep retrofit of structurally sound, habitable dwellings in good condition as opposed to demolition and replacement unless a strong justification in respect of the latter has been put forward by the applicant in accordance with the requirements of Development Plan Objective CDP3.15 Replacement of a Substandard Habitable House in the Countryside.

A1.4.2 Urban Residential Development

Multiple Residential Unit Developments

In the assessment of urban residential development proposals, the Planning Authority will promote increased residential density compliant with the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (2009) and the accompanying document Urban Design Manual, A Best Practice Guide (2009) issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). To achieve good urban design, the 12 urban design principles set out in the Urban Design Manual 2009 should be taken into account when designed any scheme:

Table A1 Urban Design Manual 2009 Principles

Adaptability	Inclusivity
Context	Layout
Connections	Parking
Detailed Design	Privacy and amenity
Distinctiveness	Public realm
Efficiency	Variety

These criteria will be used at pre-application consultation meetings and in the assessment of the planning applications. In relation to the 'Inclusivity' principle, the National Disability Authority's guidance on universal design of the built and external environment should be consulted.

Apartment Developments

The Planning Authority, in assessing proposals for apartment developments, will have regard to the 'Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2020) (or as updated/superseded) and the 'Urban Development and Building Height Guidelines' (2018). All new apartment developments shall accord with or exceed the minimum floor areas indicated in these guidelines.

Build-to-Rent Accommodation

Build-to-Rent (BTR) accommodation consists of purpose-built, long-term rental apartment accommodation that incorporates dedicated residential amenities and facilities. All proposed BTR accommodation must comply with SPPR 7 and SPPR 8 as set out within the Design Standards for New Apartments (2018) (and any amending SPPR as appropriate). In this regard applications for proposed BTR must clearly demonstrate compliance with the guidelines and include details in relation to:

- The proposed ownership and operation by an institutional entity for a minimum period of not less than 15 years and no individual residential unit can be sold or rented separately for that period. A covenant or legal agreement shall be submitted and entered into in this regard;
- Proposed residential support facilities such as laundry facilities, concierge and management facilities, maintenance/repair services, waste management facilities, etc; and
- Proposed resident services and amenities for communal recreational and other activities by residents.

Plot Size

A variety of plot sizes and shapes must be incorporated into the design and layout of residential developments to allow for the different needs of potential future residents.

Space Around Buildings

All proposals for residential development shall provide for acceptable separation distances between buildings to avoid negative effects of close proximity such as excessive overlooking, overbearance and overshadowing. A minimum of 1 metre separation distance shall be included between the side walls of adjacent buildings and greater distances are appropriate for buildings over multiple floors.

Rear Garden Length

Normally, a rear garden depth of 11m will be required. This is a minimum depth and larger distances may be required depending on the nature and scale of the subject development. In the case of high density, infill developments or for housing for the older people, shorter garden lengths may be permitted if there are no overlooking issues. In deciding the appropriate length, site conditions such as landscape features, hedgerows and mature trees should be carefully considered.

Boundary Treatments

Generally, boundary walls shall be between 1.8 metres and 2 metres high and shall be provided along the rear garden boundary of each dwelling and along both side boundaries

extending from the rear boundary to the front building line of the dwelling. The finish of the walls shall be consistent with the external finishes of the dwelling house or of a sympathetic material. Proposals for alternative boundary treatments such as planting combined with appropriate fencing will also be considered favourably if it can be demonstrated that it will enhance the development.

Open Space in Residential Areas

Each green space in residential developments shall have at least one native oak tree, or other naturalised tree species of similar stature and lifespan integrated into the agreed planting/landscaping scheme. In the preparation of a design and layout of a proposed development the applicant/developer should also have regard to Section 5.2.14 Green Infrastructure within Residential Developments of Volume 1 of this Plan.

Street Lighting

External lighting shall be provided in accordance with guidelines contained in Recommendations for Site Development Works in Housing Areas published by DoEHLG and any subsequent publication or successor to this document. Street lighting proposals shall have regard to Bat Conservation Ireland; Guidance Notes for: Planners, engineers, architects and developers (Bats and Lighting) together with Bat Conservation Trust; Bats and artificial lighting in the UK, Bats and the Built Environment – Guidance Note 08/18.

Sustainable Mobility

Permeability and accessibility will be encouraged within developments to reduce car dependence and to promote active travel. Where appropriate integration with adjacent lands is possible through the provision of vehicular, pedestrian and cycle way opportunities, this should be proposed within a development. Development proposals for housing developments comprising 10 units or more shall be accompanied by a Transport and Mobility Statement outlining how convenient pedestrian and cyclist connectivity to the surrounding community has been integrated into the design and layout of the proposed development. Issues such as the provision for bus access (e.g. safe school bus pick up/drop off area) should also be addressed in the statement.

Lifetime Adaptability

The design of new housing developments must be based on the principles of universal design and lifetime adaptability. All new residential buildings must provide a ground floor low level access shower and toilet to ensure adaptability to future needs. Both internal and external

layout and design must be adaptable to the varying and changing needs of occupiers during their lifetime.

Sites for Independent Development

These sites allow applicants to design and build their own homes within the settlements of the county. The Council will require development proposals for 'sites for independent development' housing schemes to be accompanied by a detailed design brief setting out the parameters for architectural form, plot ratios, external finishes and boundary treatment. The ancillary infrastructure and services including roads, footpaths, green areas, public lighting, drainage, attenuation and water services required for the sites shall be installed by the developer.

Brownfield and Infill Site Development

The regeneration of brownfield or infill sites for residential or mixed use development is encouraged in appropriate town and village centre locations. These development proposals must respect the character and appearance of their environs and contribute to the delivery of public realm enhancements and placemaking. Ground floor activity such as commercial, office or retail uses is generally appropriate for centrally located and accessible sites and can contribute to increased footfall in these areas. Where a mix of uses is not proposed at ground floor level it must be justified by the applicant/developer why this approach was adopted. Due to the potential additional issues associated with brownfield redevelopment relative to the development of greenfield locations a flexible approach may be taken by the Planning Authority in circumstances where the proposed development contributes to sustainable compact development.

Where brownfield redevelopment is proposed, dependent on the site history ground investigations and mitigation measures may be required where contamination issues arise.

Place Names

Place names are an important part of the county's cultural heritage and reflect local history from ancient times to the present. The Planning Authority considers it important that new place names for estates reflect the local topography, history, culture or ecology of an area. The developer must submit proposed names to the Planning Authority for the consideration of the Placenames Committee of the Council as part of the agreement of planning conditions. Bi-lingual signage within housing developments is required and the applicant/developer should ensure that the chosen place name for a new residential development is appropriate relative to its location and should avoid names already in use within the county.

Management Companies

Certain private housing developments (e.g. apartment complexes, holiday home schemes) will have a condition attached to their planning permission which requires that a properly

constituted management company be established for the purposes of maintaining the development and its shared services in accordance with the Multi-Unit Development Act 2011. Membership of the management company shall be required for all purchasers of property.

If a development (or part thereof) is to be taken in charge by the Council the applicant shall agree which areas are to be taken in charge, and this shall be clearly indicated on a site layout plan. All areas not to be taken in charge by the Council shall also be clearly indicated on a site layout plan and shall be the responsibility of and maintained by a management company. These details shall be submitted with the planning application.

Part V

Part V as set out in Section 96 of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) applies to lands zoned for residential use or a mixture of residential and other uses. In implementing Part V the Planning Authority will have regard to the Housing Strategy in place for the county at the time of implementation, the zoning objectives for the sites concerned and will ensure compliance with relevant legislation, including the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 and the Planning and Development Regulations 2001 (as amended).

Taking in Charge

Clare County Council, in managing matters relating to the taking in charge of private residential developments will comply with Section 180 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and Clare County Council's Taking in Charge Policy for Housing Developments (2019) (or as updated/superseded). Developers intending on having residential developments 'Taken in Charge' shall engage with the Planning Authority and ensure compliance with appropriate standards and the grant of planning permission. This will assist in the handover of services, roads, etc on completion of the development.

A1.4.3 Childcare Facilities in Residential Areas

In established residential areas detached houses/sites or substantial semi-detached properties with space for off-street car parking and/or suitable drop-off and collection points for customers and also space for an outdoor play area are likely to be more acceptable for the provision of child care facilities. This is especially the case if this involves use of only part of the house and the residential use remains.

The use of terraced properties or semi-detached properties on small plots is less likely to be acceptable for full day care facilities and will be assessed on their merits with regard to the objectives and development management guidelines outlined in this Plan. Sessional or after-school care which is ancillary to the main residential use, may be more appropriate in this regard. New housing schemes will be expected to plan for and include provision for childcare facilities. The level of provision will depend on the particular circumstances but as a guide one

childcare facility for a minimum of 20 childcare places per approximately 75 dwellings may be appropriate.

A1.4.4 Design Statements

A design statement is a short document which enables the applicant to explain why a particular design solution is considered the most suitable for a particular site, especially for larger or more complex forms of development. The statement will usually consist of both text and graphics but is not intended to duplicate planning application documents. The design statement should address all Development Plan Objectives and should include, but not be limited to the following considerations:

- The 12 criteria set out in the Best Practice Urban Design Manual (DoECLG 2009);
- Universal accessibility and design;
- Residential density (if applicable);
- Statement of housing mix (where applicable);
- Overshadowing, overlooking and overbearance;
- Refuse bin locations/waste management; and
- An Energy Efficiency and Climate Change Adaptation Design Statement.

For larger developments (in excess of 3 dwelling houses or >300m²) and for sites in key locations applicants will be required to submit a Design Statement with their planning application. This will assist the Planning Authority in the assessment of the proposed development.

A1.5 Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS)

Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes comprise of a series of management practices and control structures that aim to mimic natural drainage. They reduce flood risk, improve water quality and can provide urban amenities through the use of permeable paving, swales, green roofs, rainwater harvesting, detention basins, ponds and wetlands. SUDS can remove pollutants from urban run-off at source, can control surface water run-off from developments and can ensure flood risk does not increase elsewhere as a result of a proposed development. Importantly SUDS provide the opportunity to combine water management with green space which can increase amenity and biodiversity.

The Planning Authority will require development proposals to minimise 'soil sealing' (the covering of ground by impermeable material) and all new developments (including amendments / extensions to existing developments) will be required to incorporate SUDS.

A1.6 Transport and Movement

The transportation standards for development in the county are set out in the following sections. In the promotion of modal shift away from the private car and the further integration of transportation and land use new developments shall, as far as practicable, include

appropriate walking, cycling, and public transport (where relevant) infrastructure provision. The standards as set out in this Appendix should be read in conjunction with existing national guidance, which includes the following publications:

- Achieving Effective Workplace Travel Plans Guidance for Local Authorities;
- Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS);
- DN-GEO-03030 - Guidance on Minor Improvements to National Roads;
- DNGEO-03084 Treatment of Transition Zones to Towns and Villages on Urban Roads;
- National Cycle Manual;
- Permeability Best Practice Guide;
- Recommendations for Site Development Works for Housing Areas;
- Road Safety Impact Assessment (RSIA), TII Publication PE-PMG-02001 Road Safety Impact Assessment;
- Road Safety Audit: TII Publications GE-STY-01024 Road Safety Audit;
- Roads Traffic Act, 1994 (as amended);
- Road Traffic Regulations, 1997-2012;
- Smarter Travel;
- Spatial Planning and National Roads: Guidelines for Planning Authorities;
- Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas: Guidelines for Planning Authorities;
- TII Publication PE-DDV-02046 Area Based Transport Assessment (ABTA) Guidance Notes;
- TII Publications / Design Manual for Roads and Bridges;
- TII Traffic and Transport Assessment (TTA) Guidelines (2014);
- Workplace Travel Plans A Guide for Implementers;
- Traffic Management Guidelines;
- Traffic Signs Manual, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport; and
- The Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy.

A1.6.1 Cycle Routes, Footpaths and Roads

Walking and Cycling

To promote the modal shift away from the private car to more sustainable modes of transport a central element of the design of any new development, including new road infrastructure, shall be walking and cycling facilities that are well connected, safe, attractive and accessible. Footpaths shall be designed to allow pedestrians pass each other in comfort and shall accommodate persons with mobility issues and visual impairments.

Cycle paths shall be in accordance with the standards as set out in the Traffic Management Guidelines and the National Transport Authority's (NTA) National Cycle Manual. Street lighting shall be provided along these footpaths and cycle paths in accordance with the recommendations made in 'Site Development Works for Housing Areas' (DoEHLG) and any subsequent publication or successor to this document.

Road Category Definitions for the Purpose of this Plan

Road categories, speed management and traffic calming will generally be required to comply with the current edition of Traffic Management Guidelines i.e. Primary Distributor Road, District Distributor Road, Local Collector Road, Access Road. NRA 41/95 from NRA Design Manual for Urban Streets and Roads is the reference for design of accesses to developments. Road construction and other services will generally be required to comply with the current edition of the Recommendations for Site Development Works in Housing Areas published by DoEHLG. Road design and layout is of critical importance to the formation of successful urban design.

Primary Distributor Roads

It is considered that the predominant role of this road category is to serve long distance traffic. Relief road proposals in urban areas may come into this category.

District Distributor Roads

This category runs between districts and through major residential areas and is designed to slow traffic. There is no direct access for residences or commercial units except in exceptional circumstances. The road shall be a minimum of 6.5 metres wide with two footpaths, each 2 metres wide separated by a grass margin from the road. The width of footpaths and grass margins may be reduced where cycle facilities are provided. The Planning Authority may require that the distributor road, which is often constructed in a number of phases, to be designed and constructed to a standard that is capable of accommodating construction traffic.

Local Collector Roads

For developments of more than 80 dwellings, or for developments which form part of larger land parcels which will contain more than 80 dwellings, the Planning Authority will normally require a Local Collector Road, a road with no direct dwelling access. No road with direct dwelling access should serve more than 80 dwellings. The road shall be minimum 5.5 metres maximum 6.0 metres not including cycle lanes. Two footpaths required each of 2 metres width. Grass margins may be required.

Access Road

This category serves housing developments or roads within a development serving less than 80 units. An access road of 5.5 metres is required with 1.5-metre-wide footpaths. This may be relaxed to 5 metres where a small number of dwellings are being served or the aim is to create a street. A cycle path may also be required in developments where a cycle network is being developed in the area. A 1 metre grass verge may also be appropriate and present an opportunity to provide a landscape scheme to create a setting for the development. Road

designs need to take account of necessary permeability in new housing areas, both for vehicles and pedestrians. Such layouts should effectively restrict speed, providing traffic calming where required and accommodate service vehicles. Layouts, which give priority to pedestrians and cyclists shall be encouraged. Dedicated routes should be adequately lit and designed to ensure personal safety and to prevent motorised vehicle access.

Cul-de-Sacs

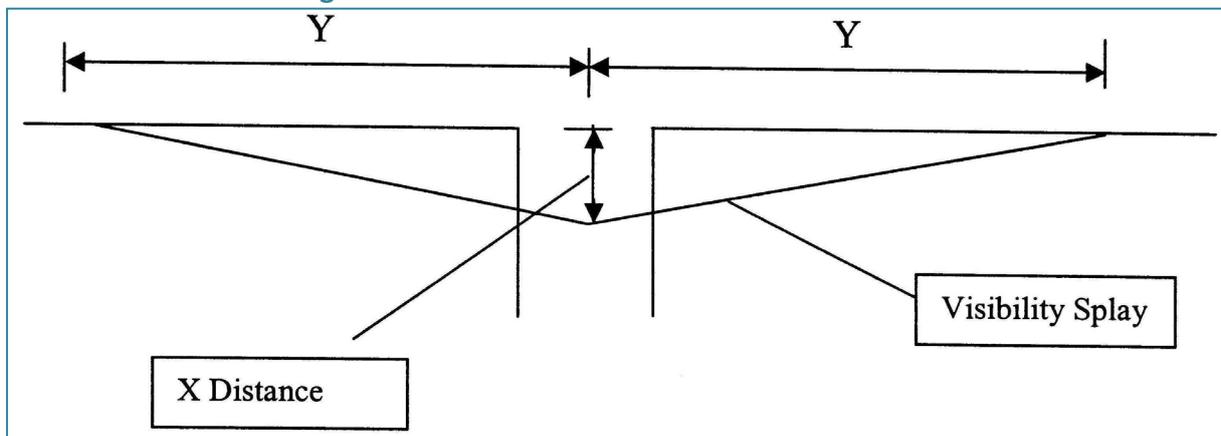
Generally, not more than 35 dwellings shall be permitted. The road width shall be 5.5 metres, wide with two 1.5-metre-wide footpaths. A single footway may suffice where the cul-de-sac serves less than 20 dwellings. In smaller cul-de-sacs, serving less than 10 dwellings, footpaths may not be required if it is clear that pedestrian priority is paramount.

A1.6.2 Sight Distances

Entrance Sight Distances

In order to ensure that adequate visibility exists for drivers entering and leaving a dwelling site, it is necessary to create an envelope of visibility on either side of the centre line of the access. This is calculated by defining a setback along the centre line, known as the X distance, from a point on the edge of the hard surfaced roadway for a distance of 2.4 metres or in the case of very lightly trafficked roads, a relaxation to 2 metres may be permitted.

Figure A1.1 Definition of “X” and “Y” Distances



The Y distance is measured from a point on the near edge of the hard surfaced roadway to its intersection with the centre line of the access. A line can then be drawn between the outer point of the Y distance to the setback on the X distance, thus producing a triangular envelope of visibility on either side of the access. The Y distance is determined as follows:

Table A2 – Sight Distance Requirements

Design Speed of major Road (kph)	120	100	85	70	60	50
“Y” distance (metres)	295	215	160	120	90	70

The Planning Authority will also assess the visibility from and towards right turning vehicles into the site access in the consideration of traffic safety.

It may be necessary to obtain the consent of adjoining landowners in order to achieve sight distances. Further information can be obtained from the National Roads Authority Design Standards for Roads and Bridges.

A1.6.3 Bicycle and Vehicle Parking Standards

The parking standards outline the number of parking spaces required for new developments. The principal objective of defining parking standards is to ensure that in assessing development proposals appropriate consideration is given to the accommodation of vehicles attracted to the site within the context of the promotion of modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport. The Council’s car parking standards have also been informed by the NPF which requires a strong focus on consolidating growth within existing built-up areas, strengthening our urban centres and improving public transport, permeability and accessibility. The standards have also been informed by the ‘Sustainable Urban Housing: Design Standards for New Apartments – Guidelines for Planning Authorities’ (December 2020) including SPPR 8.

Table A3 – Bicycle and Vehicle Parking Standards

Land Use	Bicycle Parking	Car Parking	
		Town Centres	Other Areas
Residential Developments – dwelling houses and apartments	With garage: none Without garage: 1 space per unit	1 space for 1 & 2 bed units 1 space for ≥ 3 bed units	1 space for 1 & 2 bed units 2 spaces for ≥ 3 bed units
Visitor Parking		1 space per 3 residential units	1 space per 3 residential units
Hotel / Guesthouse / B&B / Hostel	1 space per 10 bedrooms in hotel/	1 space per room + 1 space per 3 staff on duty	1 space per room + 1 space per 3 staff on duty

	guesthouse/ B&B 1 space per 5 bed spaces in hostels	+ public space such as bars & restaurants as per the standards in this table	+ public space such as bars & restaurants as per the standards in this table
Caravan / Camping Site	1 space per pitch	1 space per pitch + 1 space per 3 staff on duty	1 space per pitch + 1 space per 3 staff on duty
Industrial or Manufacturing Uses	1 space per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100m ²
Data Centre	1 space per 500m ²	-	1 space per 500m ²
Warehousing	1 space per 1000m ²	1 space per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100 m ²
Offices	1 space per 5 employees 1 space per 100m ²	1 space per 100m ² + 10% of staff parking for visitors	2 spaces per 100m ² + 10% of staff parking for visitors
Bank / Financial / Insurance	1 space per 8 employees 1 space per consulting room	2 spaces per 100m ² +10% of staff parking for visitors	3 spaces per 100m ² +10% of staff parking for visitors
Local Shop	1 space per 5 employees 24 spaces per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100m ²	3 spaces per 100m ²
Convenience Retail	1 space per 5 employees 20 spaces per 1000m ²	5-7 spaces per 100m ² (dependent on-site characteristics)	8 spaces per 100m ²
Shopping Centre or Large Retail Store (>1000m ² gross floorspace)	1 space per 5 employees 24 spaces per 1000m ²	5-7 spaces per 100m ² (dependent on-site characteristics) + 1 lorry space per 750m ²	8 spaces per 100m ² + 1 lorry space per 750m ²
Retail Warehousing	1 space per 8 employees 10 spaces per 1000m ²	4 spaces per 100m ²	5 spaces per 100m ²
Petrol Filling Station	1 space per 8 employees	1 space per 100m ² + 1 space per 3 staff on duty	1 space per 100m ² +1 space per 2 staff on duty



Cash & Carry	1 space per 10 employees 5 spaces per 1000m ²	1 space per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100m ²
Restaurant / Cafe / Take-away	1 space per 8 employees 5 spaces per 100m ²	10 spaces per 100m ² (net)	12.5 spaces per 100m ² (net)
Crèche / Playschool / Nursery	1 space per 8 employees	1 per employee and 0.25 spaces per child	1 per employee and 0.25 per child
Licensed Premises (including hotel bars)	1 space per 8 employees	10 spaces per 100m ² (net)	12.5 spaces per 100m ² (net)
Hospital	1 space per 8 employees 5 spaces per 100 beds	1 space per patient bed + 1 per doctor/consultant + 1 per 3 nursing and ancillary staff	1 space per patient bed + 1 per doctor/consultant + 1 per 3 nursing and ancillary staff
Nursing Home	1 space per 8 employees 5 spaces per 100 beds	0.5 spaces per patient bed + 1 per doctor/consultant + 1 per 3 nursing and ancillary staff	1 space per patient bed + 1 per doctor/consultant + 1 per 3 nursing and ancillary staff
Medical / Dental Clinic	1 space per 8 employees + 1 space per consulting room	1 space per consulting room + 1 per doctors/consultant +1 per 3 nursing and ancillary staff	1 space per consulting room + 1 per doctors/consultant +1 per 3 nursing and ancillary staff
Primary & Secondary Schools	1 space per 5 employees 1 space per-5 students	1 space per teaching staff + 1 space per 2 ancillary staff + additional 15% of staff parking for visitors	1 space per teaching staff + 1 space per 2 ancillary staff + additional 15% of staff parking for visitors
Universities and other Higher Education Institutes	1 space per 4 employees 1 space per 4 students*	Case-by case	Case-by case
Church, Theatres, Cinemas & Auditoriums	1 space per 20 fixed seats	1 space per 4 seats	1 space per 4 seats
Cultural, Community &	1 space per 8 employees	2 spaces per 100m ²	4 spaces per 100m ²

Recreational Buildings	4 spaces per 100m ²		
Commercial Leisure (amusement centres, play centres etc)	1 space per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100m ²	2 spaces per 100m ²
Ballroom / Dance Club / Function Room	2 spaces per 100m ²	10 spaces per 100m ² (net)	12.5 spaces per 100m ² (net)
Golf Clubs / Pitch and Putt		2 spaces per hole + public space such as bars & restaurants as per the standards in this table	4 spaces per hole + public space such as bars & restaurants as per the standards in this table
Golf Driving Range		0.25 spaces per 0.5m base line	0.5 spaces per 0.5m base line
Athletics / Playing Fields	2 spaces per track/field	5 per track + 10 space per playing field/pitch	10 per track + 10 spaces per playing field/pitch
Tennis Courts	2 spaces per court	1 space per court	2 spaces per court
Bowling Alley	1 space per 8 employees 0.5 space per lane	2 spaces per lane + 1 per 3 staff on duty	3 spaces per lane + 1 per 3 staff on duty
Swimming Pool	1 space per 8 employees 5 spaces per 100m ²	5 spaces per 100m ²	10 spaces per 100m ²
* Refers to fulltime employees and fulltime students.			

1. In the case of any development type not listed in Table A3, the Planning Authority will determine the parking requirement having regard to the traffic and movement generation associated with the development and other objectives contained in the Plan;
2. Where reference is made to floor area, this refers to gross floor area unless otherwise stated;
3. Car parking should be located to the rear of building lines where possible. Large areas of car parking should be accompanied by a landscaping plan to mitigate the visual impact of same;
4. All bicycle parking spaces must be secure. Where multiple bicycle parking spaces are required) e.g. in schools and larger workplaces) the bicycle parking area must be both secure and covered;
5. The car parking requirement for residential developments is a maximum standard;

6. In non-residential developments, 5% of car parking spaces provided should be set aside for disabled car parking. Where the nature of a particular development is likely to generate a demand for higher levels of disabled car parking, the Planning Authority may require a higher proportion of parking for this purpose. Disabled car parking spaces should be located as close as possible to the building entrance points and allocated and suitably signposted for convenient access;
7. In non-residential developments, 10% of car parking spaces should be set aside for parent and child car parking. Parent and child parking spaces should be provided as close as reasonably possible to the building entrance points and should be allocated and suitably signposted for convenient access;
8. Age Friendly car parking spaces should generally be provided, where possible, in all developments. These parking spaces should be located as close as possible to the building entrance points and allocated and suitably signposted for convenient access;
9. In rural areas, shared car parking provision for hotel and associated leisure facilities may be considered where these services are shared, so as to reduce a potential overprovision of car parking;
10. In town centre locations, in mixed use development proposals, consideration will be given to dual parking usage, where peak times do not coincide;
11. Where the construction of a new school or childcare facility or an extension to an existing school/childcare facility is proposed, the Planning Authority will seek that the provisions of the NTA's Safe Routes to School Design Guide (2021) are applied to the proposal. Provision shall be made within the site for staff parking. Set down areas are not encouraged in close proximity to schools, unless there is no safe alternative area for set down within a short walk e.g. 5mins. This means where cars can park safely, with a footpath link to the school, which includes public residential streets, schools should promote Park'n'Stride as an alternative. It should be noted that Disabled Persons Parking Spaces and School Bus set down are exceptions and can be provided in close proximity while not impeding pedestrian or cyclist access; and
12. Applicants may propose an alternative parking arrangement to the standards as set out in the parking standards set out in Table A3 for the agreement of the Planning Authority. Alternative parking standards may include car-free development within specified contexts. In the instance a deviation from the standards is proposed the applicant/developer shall submit details of the predicted parking requirements associated with the proposed development and the capacity of the proposed onsite provision to accommodate this demand (including at peak times).

The design dimensions for a car parking space are as follows:

- Each car space shall be 4.8m x 2.5m wide, with 6.1m circulation aisles.
- Disabled spaces shall be 4.8m x 3.6m wide
- Parent and child spaces shall be 4.8m x 3.6m wide
- Loading bays shall be generally 9m x 5m (but at least 6m x 3m).

Electric Car Charging Points

All developments should provide facilities for the charging of battery-operated cars at a rate of up to 20% of the total car parking spaces (coded/metered slow charging 220-240V, 13A single phase). These electric car charging spaces should be clearly demarcated with appropriate signage. The remainder of the parking spaces should be constructed so as to be capable of accommodating future charging points, as required.

New residential development should accommodate at least one car parking space equipped with an EV charging point for every five car parking spaces being provided for the associated development.

Rapid Charge Points should be provided within centres of commercial activity and clearly demarcated with appropriate signage.

A1.6.4 Traffic Impact Assessments (TIA), Road Safety Audits and Road Safety Impact Assessments

A Traffic Impact Assessment is a comprehensive review of all the potential transport impacts of a proposed development or re-development, with an agreed plan to mitigate any adverse consequences. The TIA should be prepared in accordance with the Traffic Management Guidelines Manual 2003 issued by the Department of Transport and the Traffic and Transport Assessment Guidelines 2014 published by the TII. These guidelines provide guidance including thresholds and sub-thresholds above which TIA is required. It is important that scoping of the TIA is undertaken at pre-planning consultation stage between developers and the Planning Authority.

Road Safety Impact Assessment is described in the EU Directive on Road Infrastructure Safety Management (EU RISM) 2008/96/EC as a strategic comparative analysis of the impact of a new road, or of substantial modifications to an existing road, on the safety performance of the road network. A road safety audit must be submitted as part of any planning application where the proposed development incorporates a new access to a national Road or where it may give rise to an increase in traffic to a National Road. Road Safety Audits shall be carried out independently by assessors approved by Transport Infrastructure Ireland. Further information is contained in Transport Infrastructure Ireland publications HD19 and HA42/01.

A1.6.5 Access and Mobility

The Planning Authority will encourage development that facilitates access for persons who may otherwise be excluded. Part M of the Building Regulations sets out the requirements which have to be applied in the design of new and existing structures in order to facilitate public access.

The Planning Authority, in considering proposals for developments requiring public access, shall have regard to the National Disability Authority Guidelines A Universal Design Approach.

A1.7 Signage

Clare County Council recognises the role of well-located and sympathetically designed signage, whether attached to a building or free standing, in contributing to the character and vitality of commercial areas. However, whether by design, scale, location, proliferation or ancillary issues such as manner of lighting, advertising has the capacity to seriously injure the visual qualities of an area and, on occasion, to pose a hazard to motorists by creating a distraction. Clare County Council will seek the removal of such advertisements. The Council will permit advertisements which are designed sensitively and sympathetically, and which enhance the appearance and vitality of an area. Under the Roads Act 1993 the consent of the Roads Authority is required for any sign or structure erected on a public road.

Planning permission is required where the sign is on private property unless deemed exempt under the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended). Under the Litter Pollution Act 1997, the Local Authority has powers to remove any sign that is not exempted development or does not have permission under the Planning Acts.

There are certain planning exemptions for signage under Part 2, Article 6 of the Planning and Development Regulations. In general, the sign should be an integral part of the elevational design. The following criteria shall be used in assessing applications for signage:

A1.7.1 Signage – General

All proposals for signage shall:

- Not compromise road safety;
- Not be internally illuminated;
- Be of high visual quality in terms of design, colour and material;
- Be of a scale/character suitable to the building and the host environment;
- Not interfere with windows or other facade features or project above the skyline;
- Not detract from built or natural heritage;
- Comply with the shop front policies contained in this Plan;
- Comply with the TII Road Signage Guidelines;
- Be attached to a wall, pole or other solid structure – free standing signs will generally not be permitted;
- Where advertising is already a feature, prevent an impression of clutter in any location; and
- Ensure that the use of electronic variable messaging signs (VMS signs) is reserved strictly for use in roadwork activities, hazard information and/or as part of an approved event traffic management plan.

A1.7.2 Advertising Signage

All proposals for advertising signage shall meet the following criteria:

- Signs will only be permitted where an advertising 'need' can be demonstrated. In this context the term 'need' relates to the requirement of the travelling public and not the desire of the applicant to advertise as widely as possible;
- In general advertisement structures will not be permitted at roundabouts, at traffic signalised junctions, at locations where they obstruct sight lines, compete with traffic signs, give rise to confusion for road users or endanger traffic safety;
- Applications for road signage along motorways, national routes and along approach roads to towns and villages will generally not be permitted, in accordance with the provisions of the DoECLG Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012);
- Large scale commercial advertisements are not acceptable on or near buildings of architectural or historic importance, in parks or in Architectural Conservation Areas;
- General advertising signage will be permitted on the subject business/development in accordance with Section A1.9.1 above; and
- In industrial estates, business parks, enterprise centres etc. the use of grouped advertising signs will be encouraged.

A1.7.3 Directional Signage

Directional signs for local premises distant from the main traffic routes may be permitted under an annual licence provided:

- They are finger post signs only;
- The maximum area of the sign shall be 0.7m²;
- The information contained on the sign shall be directional in nature only;
- The premises shall not be located greater than 2kms from the sign;
- The maximum number of signs shall generally not exceed two; and
- The sign shall not give rise to a traffic hazard.

A1.7.4 Tourism Signage

All proposed tourism-related signage shall meet the following criteria:

- Signage for key tourism attractions, tourism routes, community facilities or other public or infrastructure facilities will only be permitted on the subject development, at the entry points to the host town or village or in the immediate vicinity of key junctions leading to the subject development. At such locations, signage for multiple facilities/attractions shall be grouped on a single sign;
- Applications for signage shall comply with the requirements of the 'Policy on the Provision of Tourist and Leisure Signage on National Roads (NRA 2011) or any other relevant standards and legislation that may be enacted; and
- All lettering, logos and symbols are subject to the approval of Clare County Council.

A1.7.5 Advertising Hoardings (including billboards)

Advertising hoardings, including tri-vision and three-dimension signs, inappropriately located, can constitute one of the most obtrusive elements of all forms of outdoor advertisement. They rely on size, scale and location to make an impact and therefore are often detrimental to the character of the area in which they are located and, in some cases, contribute to a traffic hazard. Generally, they are used to advertise a single product. The space is usually leased from the advertising company for a period of time which can be as short as two weeks.

The practice of parking trailers or other mobile objects bearing advertisements in fields adjoining roads has become a feature on Irish roads in recent years. Such advertisements can be harmful to the visual amenities of the areas, represent a traffic hazard by virtue of distracting motorists and can have impacts on local biodiversity.

In relation to large advertising hoardings the Council will:

- Prohibit such advertisements in the open countryside, in Architectural Conservation Areas and where they would detract from the visual quality of the setting of a protected structure;
- In all other cases, have regard to the visual impacts of a proposed advertising hoarding and potential of traffic hazard arising from same;
- Consider advertising hoardings, of artistic merit, on a temporary basis, where they would screen a derelict building or other unattractive vacant site or where construction works are on-going; and
- Consider hoardings in industrial areas where their presence, by reason of scale and design, is not out of character with the existing environment.

A1.7.6 Temporary Construction Hoarding/Safety Netting

Where construction hoardings/safety nets are required along the main streets of towns and villages in the county, for periods in excess of 4 weeks, they shall be designed and maintained so as to screen the construction site and to contribute in a positive manner to the overall streetscape pending completion of the development works.

The design of these hoardings may reflect some aspect of the area's rich heritage (using local scenes) and/or inform pedestrians about the proposed development in a visually pleasing manner. The creative use of art, colour, images and graphics is encouraged and an element of advertising may also be incorporated, subject to the agreement of the Planning Authority. All graphics, designs etc. shall be submitted to the Planning Authority and written agreement shall be obtained prior to the erection of any such construction hoardings. It should be noted that a licence may be required for scaffolding/hoarding in certain instances (e.g. on footpaths). The applicants should enquire with the Council to see if a licence is required in each case.

A1.7.7 Signage at Petrol Stations

Minimal advertising will be permitted at petrol stations and generally shall be restricted to a single main pillar/totem pole sign structure which shall not exceed 4.5 metres in height.

Canopies should be appropriate to their setting in terms of height and design. They should not be internally illuminated. A maximum of two signs shall be permitted on the canopy which shall be externally or halo lit.

The forecourt and adjacent footpath shall not be used for advertising whether for permanent or temporary structures.

A1.8 Agricultural Developments

The rural countryside is a natural resource with agricultural activity being particularly important. In considering proposals for agricultural development (walls, fences, yards, stables, sheds, slurry pits etc.) the Planning Authority will have regard to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine document Guidelines and Recommendations on the Control of Pollution from Farmyard Wastes together with the following:

- Siting and design that is keeping with the surrounding area;
- The use of muted colored materials;
- Grouping of buildings will be encouraged;
- Adequate effluent storage facilities; and
- The Planning Authority will require adequate provision for the collection, storage and disposal of effluent produced from agricultural developments. The European Communities (Good Agricultural Practice for the Protection of Waters) Regulations, 2014 set out the requirements for storage of farm effluents and the minimum holding periods for storage of farm wastes. In Clare the holding period required for the purposes of calculating waste storage facilities is 18 weeks. It is permitted to spread soiled water all year round, thus the minimum holding period is 10 days. For silage the short-term storage period is 3 days. All agricultural developments must be designed and constructed in accordance with the Minimum Specifications as set out by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

'The Living Farmland', a guide to farming with nature in Clare (2008), is a useful reference for consideration when planning farm developments.

A1.9 Archaeological Heritage

In considering proposals for development, applicants are advised to consult the archaeological maps (available for viewing in the Planning Department) in order to ascertain whether their development is located in an area of archaeological potential.

If a proposed development site is located in such an area or is large in scale (greater than 0.5ha or over 1km in length for a linear scheme), it is advisable to consult with the Council at the earliest possible opportunity. The National Monuments Service of The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage may also be consulted, including via the Developments Applications Unit: manager.dau@housing.gov.ie.

All planning applications for new development, redevelopment, any ground works, refurbishment and restoration, etc. within areas of archaeological potential or within close proximity to Recorded Monuments must take account of the archaeological heritage of the area and the need for archaeological mitigation. Any persons proposing to carry out works at or in relation to a Recorded Monument must give 2 months written notice, in advance, to the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Consent of the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage is required for any interference with or works to a National Monument (whether or not the works are archaeological in nature)

Developers should give due consideration to the following:

1. *Framework and Principles for the Protection of Archaeological Heritage*, DAHG (1999)
2. *Planning Leaflet 13: Archaeology and the Planning Process*, OPR/DHLGH (2021)
3. *Archaeology & Development: Guidelines for Good Practice for Developers*, Heritage Council (2000)

Developers are advised of the requirements set under the National Monuments (Amendment) Act 1994 with regard to procedures if their site is located within an area of archaeological potential. Developers are strongly advised to have pre-application discussions if their site is located in such an area.

A1.10 Monetary Requirements

A1.10.1 Development Contributions

The Planning Authority, taking into consideration the capital expenditure necessary for the provision of infrastructure required to facilitate development, will require financial contributions for permitted developments. The Council has prepared a schedule of development contributions in accordance with its obligations under Sections 48 and 49 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended) and having regard to 'Development Contribution Scheme – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (DoEHLG 2013), which is reviewed annually. Details of the rates applied are available from the Planning Department and are payable prior to commencement of development. In exceptional circumstances a Special Development Contribution may be required in addition to the standard rates in order to provide a specific piece of infrastructure, the provision of which will facilitate the development as proposed.

A1.10.2 Cash Deposits and Bonds

Planning conditions may be attached to a grant of permission requiring the lodgment of cash deposits or bonds from an agreed financial institution for the satisfactory completion of residential and other developments and their ancillary services.

Appendix 2

Indicative Land Use Zoning Matrix

The purpose of the land-use zoning matrix is to provide an indication only of the type of developments that may or may not be normally considered or open for consideration on zoned lands. Each proposal submitted to the Council for consideration will be assessed based on its own individual merits.

Key

Note: all development proposals will be assessed thoroughly through the Development Management process in accordance with Section 34 of the Planning and Development Act, 2000 (as amended).

✓ = **Will normally be acceptable in principle.**

A proposed use that will be classified as acceptable in principle in the relevant zone subject to compliance with policies and objective as set out in this plan and in accordance with the proper planning and sustainable development of the area.

O = **Open to consideration.**

A proposed use that will be open to consideration, but subject to particular considerations for example, compatibility with adjoining uses, scale or whether or not the proposal is prejudicial to the amenities of an area or the residential amenities of an adjoining property.

X = Will not normally be acceptable.

A proposed use that is classified “will not normally be acceptable” in a specific zoning will not be accepted by the Planning Authority.

Land Use	Mixed Use	Existing residential	Residential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recreation	Open Space	Buffer Space	Enterprise	Tourism	Industry	Light Industry	Maritime / Harbour	Agriculture	Marine Related Industry
Allotments	X	O	X	X	X	O	O	O	X	O	O	X	X	X	✓	X
Advertisement Structures	✓	X	X	X	✓	O	O	X	X	O	O	O	O	O	X	O
Agri. Business	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	✓	O	O	✓	X	O	X
Agri. Tourism	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X
Amusement Arcade	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
B & B /Guesthouse	✓	O	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	O	X
Bank / Financial Institution	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Betting Office	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Boarding Kennels	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	O	X	O	X
Carpark	✓	X	X	X	✓	O	O	X	X	✓	O	✓	✓	O	X	X
Caravan Park/Camp Site/ Motor Home Park (Tourist uses)Glamping	O	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	O	X

Land Use	Mixed Use	Existing residential	Residential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recreation	Open Space	Buffer Space	Enterprise	Tourism	Industry	Light Industry	Maritime / Harbour	Agriculture	Marine Related Industry
Cash & Carry/ Wholesale Outlet	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X
Cemetery	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Chemist / Pharmacy	✓	O	X	X	✓	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cinema / Theatre	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Civic & Amenity Recycling Facility	✓	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	O	O	O
Civic / cultural / heritage building	✓	X	X	X	O	✓	O	X	X	O	✓	X	X	O	X	O
Community Facility	✓	✓	O	O	O	✓	O	X	X	✓	O	X	X	O	X	X
Composting Facility	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	X
Construction & Demolition (C&D) Waste Recycling Centre	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	✓	O	O	O
Crèche / Childcare Facility	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	O	O	X	X	X
Data Centre	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	X	X	X	X
Disco / Night club	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Doctor/Dentist	✓	O	O	O	✓	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X
Dog Grooming	✓	O	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X

Land Use	Mixed Use	Existing residential	Residential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recreation	Open Space	Buffer Space	Enterprise	Tourism	Industry	Light Industry	Maritime / Harbour	Agriculture	Marine Related Industry
Education/Enterprise Centre	✓	0	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	0	X	X	X
Function Room	0	X	X	X	0	0	0	X	X	X	✓	X	X	0	X	0
Funeral Home	0	X	X	X	✓	0	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	X
Fuel Depot	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	X	0	0	X	X	0
Garden Centre	0	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	✓	X	0	X
Golf Course / Pitch and Putt	0	X	X	X	X	0	✓	✓	X	0	✓	X	X	X	0	X
Go-kart track	X	X	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	0	0	X	0	X	0	X
Hair Dressing Salon & Beauticians	✓	0	0	0	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Health Centre / clinic	✓	0	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	X	X	X
Heavy Vehicle Park	x	x	x	x	0	x	x	x	x	0	x	✓	✓	0	0	0
Helicopter Pad	0	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	X	0	0	0	0	X	0	0
Home Based Economic Activities	✓	0	0	0	✓	X	X	X	X	0	X	X	X	X	0	0
Hospital	0	X	X	X	0	0	X	X	X	0	X	X	0	X	X	X
Hostel	0	0	X	X	0	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X

Land Use	Mixed Use	Existing residential	Residential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recreation	Open Space	Buffer Space	Enterprise	Tourism	Industry	Light Industry	Maritime / Harbour	Agriculture	Marine Related Industry
Hotel	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	O	X	X
Industry	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	O	X	X	O
Industry - Light	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	✓	X	O	✓	X	X	O
Launderette/Dry Cleaner	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Leisure / gym / rec. sports club	✓	X	X	X	✓	O	✓	O	X	O	✓	X	O	O	X	X
Library	✓	X	X	X	✓	✓	O	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	X	X
Liquor License Premises	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Lorry Depot	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	O
Mart / Co-op	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	O	X
Motor Sales / Repairs / Service	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X	X
Multiple Residential Units	O	O	✓	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Nursing Home/Retirement Village	O	O	✓	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Office <100m ²	✓	O	X	X	✓	O	X	X	X	✓	O	X	X	O	X	X
Office 100m ² -1000m ²	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	O

Land Use	Mixed Use	Existing residential	Residential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recreation	Open Space	Buffer Space	Enterprise	Tourism	Industry	Light Industry	Maritime / Harbour	Agriculture	Marine Related Industry
Office > 1000m ²	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	✓	X	X	O	X	X	X
Open Space	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	X
Petrol Station	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X
Plant / tool hire	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	X
Playground	✓	✓	✓	✓	O	✓	✓	O	X	O	O	X	O	O	O	X
Playing pitches	O	X	X	X	O	✓	✓	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	✓	X
Primary Care Facility	✓	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	x	X	X
Refuse Landfill	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X
Religious Places of Worship	O	O	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Research and development	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	✓	X	O	O	X	X	O
Residential – single dwelling (Permanent Occupation)	✓	O	O	✓	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Residential – single dwelling (short-term tourist accommodation)	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	O	X	X
Residential Institution	O	O	O	O	O	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X



Land Use	Mixed Use	Existing residential	Residential	Low Density Residential	Commercial	Community	Recreation	Open Space	Buffer Space	Enterprise	Tourism	Industry	Light Industry	Maritime / Harbour	Agriculture	Marine Related Industry
Restaurant/Café	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	O	X	X	O	✓	O	O	O	X	X
Retail Warehousing	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
School / College	O	X	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	X	✓	X	X	X	X	X	X
Science & Technology Based Enterprise	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	✓	X	O	O	X	X	X
Scrap Yard	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X
Shops (excluding Retail Warehousing)	✓	O	X	X	✓	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	O	O	X	X
Take-Away	✓	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	X
Tourism Complex	O	X	X	X	✓	X	O	X	X	✓	✓	X	X	O	O	X
Training Centre	O	X	X	X	✓	O	X	X	X	✓	X	O	✓	X	X	O
Traveller Accommodation	O	O	O	O	X	O	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	O	X
Veterinary Surgery	O	X	X	X	✓	O	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X
Warehousing	X	X	X	X	O	X	X	X	X	O	X	O	O	X	X	O
Water-based recreational activities	O	X	X	X	O	O	✓	O	X	O	✓	X	X	O	O	X
CHP/Waste to energy facilities	O	X	X	X	O	O	X	X	X	✓	X	✓	✓	X	O	O



Appendix 3 Natural Heritage Sites in County Clare

Table A3.1 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in County Clare and their associated Site Code

Site Code	Site Name
000014	Ballyalla Lake
000016	Ballycullinan Lake
002246	Ballycullinan, Old Domestic Building
000019	Ballyogan Lough
000994	Ballyteige (Clare)
000996	Ballyvaughan Turlough
000020	Black Head-Poulsallagh Complex
002250	Carrowmore Dunes
001021	Carrowmore Point To Spanish Point And Islands
000030	Danes Hole, Poulnalecka
000032	Dromore Woods And Loughs
001926	East Burren Complex
000268	Galway Bay Complex
001912	Glendree Bog
001013	Glenomra Wood
000036	Inagh River Estuary
002264	Kilkee Reefs
002319	Kilkishen House
002318	Knockanira House
000051	Lough Gash Turlough
000308	Loughatorick South Bog
002165	Lower River Shannon
000054	Moneen Mountain
000057	Moyree River System
002157	Newgrove House
002091	Newhall And Edenvale Complex
002010	Old Domestic Building (Keevagh)
002314	Old Domestic Buildings, Rylane
002245	Old Farm Buildings, Ballymacrogan
002126	Pollagoona Bog
000037	Pouladatig Cave
000064	Poulnagordon Cave (Quin)
002316	Ratty River Cave
002312	Slieve Bernagh Bog
001321	Termon Lough

Site Code	Site Name
002247	Toonagh Estate
002343	Tullaheer Lough And Bog

Table A3.2 Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in County Clare and their Associated Site Code

Site Code	Site Name
004041	Ballyallia Lough SPA
004005	Cliffs of Moher SPA
004220	Corofin Wetlands SPA
004114	Illaunonearaun SPA
004031	Inner Galway Bay SPA
004119	Loop Head SPA
004058	Lough Derg (Shannon) SPA
004182	Mid-Clare Coast SPA
004077	River Shannon And River Fergus Estuaries SPA
004168	Slieve Aughty Mountains SPA

Table A3.3 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) in County Clare and their Associated Site Code

SITE CODE	SITE NAME	TYPE
337	Doon Lough NHA	Raised Bog NHA
993	Ayle Lower Bog NHA	Raised Bog NHA
1014	Illaunonearaun	NHA
1020	Loughanilloon Bog NHA	Raised Bog NHA
2307	Cloonloun More Bog NHA	Raised Bog NHA
2367	Lough Naminna Bog NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2377	Lough Atorick District Bogs NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2397	Slievecallan Mountain Bog NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2400	Cragnashingaun Bogs NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2401	Gortacullin Bog NHA	Blanket Bog NHA

2402	Woodcock Hill Bog NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2421	Lough Acrow Bogs NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2439	Oysterman's Marsh NHA	Blanket Bog NHA
2442	Maghera Mountain Bogs	Blanket Bog NHA

National Park

- Burren National Park

Statutory Nature Reserves in County Clare

- Ballyteigue Nature Reserve
- Caher (Murphy) Nature Reserve
- Dromore Nature Reserve
- Keelhilla (Slieve Carron) Nature Reserve

Wildfowl Sanctuaries in County Clare

- Mutton Island
- Islandavanna
- Tullagher Lough
- Ballyallia Lough and
- Inagh River (part of)

Changes to designations during the life of the Development Plan may not be reflected in this document. Applicants/Landowners are advised to consult with the Natural Parks and Wildlife Service to obtain the most up to date information.

County Geological Sites

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
Aillwee Hill	51	M 257 048	Plateau karst with a wide variety of landforms. Area of dolines, uvalas, dry valleys, gorges, limestone pavement, springs, sinks, fossil caves.	Ballycahill, Lisgoogan, Aillwee, Ballyalaban, Gleninsheen, Glensleade, Berneens, Garracloon, Poulgorm.	The densest concentration and best example in Ireland of classic karst features. These features include springs, sinks, fossil cave systems, dry valleys and various enclosed depressions or dolines. A large complex doline or uvala (smaller depressions within a larger enclosing contour) is situated at the summit of Aillwee Hill. This is the largest and most spectacular such diagnostic karst feature in Ireland.
Ballycar South	58	R 5645 6410	Silurian (Wenlock) diverse shallow marine shelly fauna within conglomeratic Ballycar Member of the Cratloes Formation.	Ballycar South	Ballycar South is an important site as the rocks here, which are presently not exposed at the surface, have yielded a very diverse assemblage of brachiopods (more than 200 different species have been identified), corals, gastropods, trilobites and bryozoans of Silurian age. The shelly fauna at this site are critical in the interpretation of the palaeogeography of the region during the Silurian.
Ballycroum Hill	58	R 541 886	Devonian sandstones and conglomerates overlying Silurian siltstones.	Ballycroum Td., Feakle	An excellent unconformity where flat lying conglomerate beds are seen overlying the truncated ends of nearly vertical beds of Silurian slaty rocks. The time gap

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					represented is approximately 30 million years.
Ballykinnacorra North	57	R 2865 8848	Mushroom rocks - isolated wave worn stones in grazing fields	Ballykinnacorra North	Thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. This site is one of only about 63 mushroom stones known in the country as a whole.
Ballymalone Quarry (AKA Raheen Bridge)	58	R 649 814	Late Ordovician graptolitic shales and cherts	Ballymalone	The Ballymalone Formation has been dated by graptolite fossils to be of Caradoc age. The site provides the only representative section of these rocks in the north-eastern part of the Slieve Bernagh inlier, and complements the Ballyvorgal South site.
Ballyvorgal South	58	R 51325 68600	Late Ordovician fossiliferous mudstone of the Ballymalone Formation.	Ballyvorgal South, Ballyvorgal Beg and Cloghoolia	The Ballyvorgal site is an unusual Irish occurrence of an assemblage of deep-water fossils now found all over the world in rocks of Upper Ordovician age. The fauna has been well described and contains a characteristic mix of very small trilobites and tiny brachiopod shells.
Black Head (AKA Ceann Boirne)	51	M 154 122	Coastal cliffs and roadside pavement exposure. Carboniferous (Viséan) corals	Murrooghtoohy North	Limestone pavement with well-developed karst features. A good place to see the transition in Carboniferous corals from Siphonodendron to cerioid Lithostroton through semi-cerioid forms. The Finavarra

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					Member with dolomite bands, of the Tubber Formation is overlain by the Black Head Member, the basal unit of the Burren Formation. The first cerioid colonial rugose corals occur above the dolomite south of the road.
Bridges of Ross	63	Q 733 506	Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) sandstone, siltstone and shale. Rock arches and blowholes.	Ross	The Ross sandstone Formation consists of turbiditic sheet sandstone, siltstone and thinly bedded black shales. Slumping is common at many horizons throughout the formation, the most spectacular of which, the Ross Slide occurs at the Bridges of Ross. The Ross Slide consists of several metres of siltstone and overlying sandstone displaying a range of deformational features including recumbent folds (folds with horizontal hinge lines). Sand volcanoes are present on the upper surface of the overlying sandstone unit. Also of interest at this site are fold structures which formed during the Variscan Orogeny and a sea bridge which has developed as a result of erosion by the sea.

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
Caher Hill	52	R 5475 9065	Ordovician volcanics, graptolitic shales and cherts	Caher	Caher Hill is the type locality for the Caher Hill Formation. Yellow, cream and pink-coloured amygdaloidal trachytes occur here. The yellow trachytes host enclaves up to 10cm in diameter of basic composition. The pink trachytes contain abundant orthoclase phenocrysts. The trachytes overlie a succession of black shales and cherts, basic lapilli tuffs and a sequence of basic tuffs, lavas and breccias. These rocks provide a record of sedimentation and volcanic eruptions within the contracting Iapetus Ocean. Graptolites found within the black shales have yielded a late Ordovician, Caradoc age for the rocks. The Caher Hill Formation is also exposed south and west of Lough Graney and near Lough Ea. Spillitic lavas occur at the latter locality.
Carran Enclosed Depression	51	R 28 98	Ireland's largest enclosed depression	Castletown, Ballyconry	Ireland's largest enclosed depression. Large internally-draining basin with inlet springs and outlet via a swallow hole (or sink) developed within Carboniferous limestone. It is approximately 4.5km ² in area and 40m deep, implying a considerable length of time for development. The depression is divided into sub-enclosed basins and is ringed by moderate to steep slopes. The structure and

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					hydrology of this depression resembles both an uvala (large and complex dolines) and a polje (closed depression in a karst area).
Coad	51	R 2727 9141	Mushroom stones – isolated wave worn stones in grazing fields	Coad	The at least eight stones in question are an example of a phenomenon classed as mushroom stones. These are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. The stones at Coad comprise a large share of only about 63 mushroom stones known in the country as a whole.
Coolagh River Cave	51	M 12400 01400	Dendritic Cave System with several stream sinks / swallow holes, Blind Valley, Active Uvala	Ballynahown, Knockauns Mountain, Blakes Mountain, Cloghaun, Poulmagun	The Coolagh River Cave is a mature cave system with many subterranean and subaerial karst features. It is a dendritic cave system with several stream sinks/swallow holes. The Coolagh River sink is at a karst window, at the end of a blind valley. The Coolagh River Valley, which continues

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					southwards as a normally dry valley within the site, is also one of the major surface features of the Burren.
County Council Quarry	51	R 150 995	Viséan Limestones and Namurian Shales.	Ballyinsheen More	Upper Viséan, Carboniferous limestones are exposed at this quarry. These well-bedded, dark grey limestones are rich in fossils. Fossils found at this site include crinoids, bryozoans and corals. These corals, in particular, the coral <i>Orionastraea rete</i> , correlate with specimens found outside Ireland and indicate a Brigantian age (uppermost stage of the Viséan) for these limestones. Basal Namurian Clare Shales overlay these Viséan limestones.
Crossard	51	R 2688 9075	Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stone in grazing fields	Crosard	Mushroom stones are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. In some stones such as at Crossard, this has created a marked bulbous mushroom shape develops with a cap on a pedestal.

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
Doolin Cave	51	R 07485 96840	Dendritic cave system within Carboniferous Limestone	Doolin	Doolin Cave, a dendritic network of stream passages, is an active cave system, which has preserved various stages of cave development.
Doolin Green Holes AKA: Hell Complex or Mermaid's Hole	51	R 05600 97600	Karst caves in Carboniferous Limestone, inundated by post-glacial sea level rise	Doolin	The Doolin Green Holes are the best-documented karst caves in Ireland and consist of a series of cave passages that formed at a lower sea level than today when the water was trapped in huge ice sheets. Since their formation the caves have been inundated by post-glacial sea-level rises and have preserved much evidence of this. Also of interest here are the photokarren and phytokarst. These erosional features, which are absent in the darkest parts of the cave, are the first of their kind to be recorded outside of the tropics.
Doolin to Hags Head (Cliffs of Moher)	51, 57	From R106500 196000 to R101300 189200	Upper Carboniferous sedimentary rocks.	Doonnagore, Luogh North, Luogh South, Lislorkan North, Slievenageeragh, Shingaunagh North etc	A coastal section with a remarkable development of sand volcanoes in Carboniferous beds over-lying slumped shales and sandstones. The 'Fisherstreet Slide' is a distinctive sheet, 30 metres thick, extending over some kilometres of the section. The entire sheet moved as a sedimentary slide, and now contains a wealth of soft sediment

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					<p>deformation features. It is part of the Gull Island Formation from Doolin southwards until the Central Clare Group and comprises the bulk of the cliffs from O'Brien's Tower southward. The cliffs also illustrate cyclothem I and II (Tullig Cyclothem and Kilkee Cyclothem) of the five in the Central Clare Group. These cyclothem are repeated sequences of mudstone, siltstone and sandstone, formed by normal processes in the deltaic environment that created these rocks. They are normally separated by thin marine bands with distinctive goniatite fossils, allowing correlation of rocks and events across a wide area. They comprise a basin fill sequence with the greater depth and development of the basin in south west and central Clare. Accessible ledges of the sandstones also contain a wealth of trace fossils, apart from the very well known Liscannor Flags, which has the burrow Olivellites in abundance. The vertical sea cliffs in Upper Carboniferous shales and flagstones are of iconic status as a tourist attraction - this area is of considerable amenity value.</p>

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
Doonaha	63	Q889 531	Coastal exposures along approx. 3km of coastline. Namurian sandstones, siltstones and shales of the Gull Island Formation.	Loop Head	The succession comprises micaceous sandstones, siltstones and shales. Of importance at this site are the trace fossils preserved in the Upper Carboniferous, Namurian rocks. These starfish traces represent the only Namurian starfish traces in Ireland. The rocks are part of the Gull Island Formation, which includes the Fisherstreet Slide at its base. The presence of sand volcanoes at Doonaha indicates similar evidence of sedimentary instability. However, there are many other sedimentary and structural features of interest easily visible in the exposures.
Elmvale	51	Elmvale 1: R 2590 9170 Elmvale 2: R2587 9160	Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stones in grazing fields	Elmvale	Mushroom stones are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved.
Fergus River Cave	51	R 252 923	Ancient cave with Carboniferous Limestone.	Roughan	The Fergus River Cave is one of the oldest known in Ireland, with calcite deposits dated at greater than 350,000 years old. It contains more than 3km of largely abandoned streamway which floods in very wet conditions. The water is derived in part from the sink in the Carran enclosed

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					depression. The cave is an abandoned rising for the Fergus River, although it can flood in very wet conditions. It is notable also for mud stalagmites and for glacially derived sediments.
Foohagh Point	63	Q 853 590	Growth fault within the Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) sandstone, siltstone and mudstone of the Central Clare Group	Foohagh (to west side of Moore Bay, Kilkee)	A spectacular growth fault can be seen in the cliff face at Foohagh Point. The growth fault at Foohagh Point displaces sandstones, siltstones and mudstones within the fourth cyclothem sequence of the Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) Central Clare Group. The pale coloured sandstones of this formation display clear thickening towards the fault.
Glencurran Cave	51	R 2738 9633	An ancient cave system in the side of a wooded dry valley	Poulaphuca	Glencurran Cave is a truncated and largely sediment filled cave, making it potentially an older system than the postglacial origins of many Burren stream caves. It is a significant cave with a diversity of interest. It is largely earth-filled wide phreatic passage, with short sections of active stream cave. It has considerable geological and spelological potential as the most likely intersection to an undiscovered master cave between Castletown River Sinks in the

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					Carran Enclosed Depression and the risings at Fergus River Cave.
Gortlecka	51	R 3202 9499	Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stones in grazing fields	Gortlecka	The two stones in question are an example of a phenomenon classed as mushroom stones. These are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. In some stones such as at Gortlecka, this has created a marked smooth surface below a lip, whilst in more extreme cases a mushroom shape develops with a cap on a pedestal.
Gull Island, Tullig Point and Trusklieve section	63	Q 770 515 to Q 800 550	Upper Carboniferous Namurian sandstones and siltstones	Quilty, Oughterard, Tullig, Trusklieve	The coastal section around Gull Island and Tullig Point displays some of the best sections in Clare of the Shannon Group and Central Clare Group sedimentary rocks which infilled the Clare Basin in the Namurian, and which now are the foundation of most of south west and central County Clare. It is the type section for the Gull Island Formation of the Shannon Group. The top of this Group is marked by the R1 marine band with goniatite fossil markers. There are an extensive range of sedimentary structures, and also tectonic structures, many of which

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					were formed at the time of deposition, and record the sediment instability on the basin slopes. There are slides, growth faults and slumps present. Key sections are at Gull Island to Tullig Point and at Illaunglass and Pouladav.
Kilbreckan	58	R 399 761	Lead and silver-bearing mineral deposits in cherty Carboniferous limestone and dolomite	Kilbreckan Td.	Kilbreckan Mine was worked intermittently for silver and lead from 1834 until 1856. The mineralized bodies contain silver-bearing galena, pyrite, chalcopyrite, sphalerite and calamine in a calcite gangue. Other minerals include Bindheimite (a silver-bearing antimonite of lead), Bournonite (a sulphide mineral of copper, antimony and lead), Hemimorphite (a minor ore mineral of zinc), Quartz, Smithsonite (another zinc ore). In addition Kilbreckan is the type locality for the mineral 'Kilbrickenite' – now confirmed as the mineral Geocronite (a white sulphosalt mineral of lead). The main orebody, trending north-south, has a pipe-like shape and is up to 1m in width. A second, northwest trending mineralized body of similar thickness occurs also.
Killinaboy	51	R 2711 9149	Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stones in grazing fields	Killinaboy	Mushroom stones are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. In some stones such as at Killinaboy, this has created a marked smooth surface below a lip.
Loop Head	63	Q693 474	Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) sandstones and shales of the Ross Sandstone Formation.	Kilbaha North, Kilbaha South	The rocks between Loop Head and Ross village represent the type section of the Upper Carboniferous Ross Sandstone Formation. This formation consists of alternating, parallel-bedded sandstones and dark shales. Sedimentary structures such as scouring and channelling can be seen as well as flute, groove and rill casts. Some sand-filled channels are up to 10m deep and 100m wide. These rocks were probably deposited in a deep-marine trough or submarine fan where occasional turbidites deposited sandstones. At Loop Head and along the coast many fold structures can be seen in the cliffs. These rocks were folded towards the end of the Carboniferous by a period of mountain building called the Variscan Orogeny. There are numerous features of coastal erosion, such as arches, stacks, storm beaches, blowholes and cliff patterns totally influenced by the geological structures.

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
Maghera Quarry	52, 58	R 520 901	Ordovician Caher Hill Formation, pyroxene tuffs – a volcanic rock	Maghera (Feakle)	Olivine-pyroxene tuffs are exposed in a small quarry along a private road. They are within the Caradoc rocks of the Caher Hill Formation which include a suite of volcanic rocks such as spilite, pyroxene-olivine basalt, basic tuffs and volcanic breccias, amygdaloidal trachytes, graptolitic black shales and cherts.
Magowna	57	R 283 822	Carboniferous limestones and Clare Shales.	Magowna Castle	The junction between the Carboniferous Limestone and the Clare Shales can be seen in the waterfall, almost half a kilometre northwest of Magowna Castle. This is an interesting site and demonstrates well the contrast between the two different rock types. Interesting microfossils have been found at this site.
Mullaghmore/ Slieve Roe/ Knockanes	52	R 33000 95750	Terrace and pavement development on flat and inclined bedded Carboniferous limestone, diverse karren features, limestone erratics, shallow marl-floored lake, abandoned cave and a structurally controlled gorge.	Glenquin, Coolorta, Creehaun, Gortleacka, Knockans Lower, Leitra, Aglsih, Ballyeighter, Rockforest	The isolated mountains of the Mullaghmore – Slieve Roe – Knockanes site hosts many interesting features including spectacular limestone terraces and pavements, which have developed on the flat and inclined limestone beds. A diverse range of sub-aerial karren features such as rundkarren (rounded solutional grooves), kamenitza (shallow pools in the limestone) and rillenkarren (narrow, sharp-edged solution grooves formed on steep limestone

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					faces) are found at this locality. Densely scattered limestone erratics are another feature and are particularly abundant in the Rock Forest townland. The erratics here are the best such examples in the Burren region. Other features of note include the ancient, structurally controlled Glenquin gorge, the marl-floored Lough Gealáin and the abandoned phreatic cave at Gortlecka. The Mullaghmore – Slieve Roe – Knockanes site is a very important karst site, but extremely little scientific work has been done here. It has great potential for academic study.
Pol an Ionain	51	R 09800 99750	Ancient chambered cave with important sediments and a large stalactite situated within Carboniferous limestone	Craggycorrardan	The cave is an ancient chambered cave, containing varved sediments and a renowned stalactite, 6.541m long, which is reputed to be the largest free hanging stalactite in the world. The sediments are potentially of great importance as a record of environmental and climatic changes over the time the cave has existed.
Poulsallagh	51	M 0861 0180	Well-developed range of karren forms in the inter-tidal zone of the limestone coast.	Ballyryan	At Poulsallagh Bay and the coastal section immediately to the north of it, a compact area of foreshore exhibits a sequence of biochemically induced karren landforms that is the equal of any site in the world. On the

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					south side of Poulsallagh Bay, where part of this protective layer has been eroded away, smooth, karren-free limestones are exposed and still preserve glacial striae. The northern part of the site includes remnants of cave passages, some with quartz rich sediments derived from across Galway Bay. These exotic clasts are evidence of an earlier glacial till removed from the Burren area by later ice movement. The area also provides an ideal teaching environment and fuses biological, geological and geomorphological processes.
Rineanna Point	64	R 346 598	The base of Waulsortian limestone strata	Rineanna North	Base of Waulsortian exposed along strike on shore section into an old quarry, comparable to Deel River section on the opposite shore of the Shannon. . The limestone is heavily karstified, with karren and kamenitza (solution pits).
Rinnamona	51	R 2969 9404	Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stones in grazing fields	Rinnamona	The four stones in question are an example of a phenomenon classed as mushroom stones. These are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. In some stones such as at Rinnamona, this has

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					created a marked smooth surface below a lip.
Roadford AKA Doolin Phosphate Mine	51	Q083 971	Phosphate mines in the basal Namurian strata, overlying the Carboniferous limestone.	Toomullin, Doolin	In the river about 500m above Roadford, an outcrop of rock phosphate occurs at the base of the Namurian Clare Shales overlying the Carboniferous limestone. Phosphate mining took place here from 1924 to 1947. Some phosphatic nodules may be found in the shale exposures in the area.
Sheshymore	51	R 24150 95900	Extensive area of undisturbed limestone pavement, developed on a single bed of upper Brigantian limestone.	Sheshymore	An extensive area of undisturbed limestone pavement with well-developed karren forms. Tabular blocks of limestone or clints in this area are defined by east-west and north-south orientated joints. The central and eastern areas of pavement are smooth and predominantly karren-free suggesting previous burial beneath a protective layer of calcareous glacial till. Grikes are deepest in this area (1.5-2.5m). Several of the larger north-south trending joints have been enlarged to form vegetated trenches. Karren forms in this area include solution pans (or kamenitza), rundkarren (rounded grooves) and meanderkarren. Physical and chemical weathering has resulted in the decay of the peripheral limestone pavement to clitter and vegetated rocky grassland.

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
Spanish Point	57	R 023 785	Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) sandstone, siltstone and mudstone of the Central Clare Group.	Breaffy South, Leagard South	The coastal section at Spanish Point consists of well-bedded sandstones, siltstones and mudstones of the Upper Carboniferous (Namurian) Central Clare Group. Sedimentary structures are well preserved here and include cross-bedding, cross-laminations and symmetrical wave ripples. Some of the thicker sandstone units have undergone segmentation, or boudinage, as a result of the extensional forces exerted on the limbs of folds during the Variscan Orogeny. A marine band is present on the north side of the Spanish Point bay, with a prominent palaeosol horizon 2.5m below it stratigraphically, with rootlets, desiccation cracks etc. This represents a higher ground area between deltaic channels, exposed above water when the sediments were accumulating.
Sraheen AKA: The Banshee Stone	58	R 4286 7964	Mushroom rock – isolated wave worn stone in grazing field.	Sraheen	Mushroom stones are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. In some stones such as at Sraheen, this has created an etched lower surface with a major overhang.

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
St. Brendan's/ Poulnagollum	51	St. Brendan's Well: R 14600 98400 Poulnagollum: M15300 05200	Cave system developed within Carboniferous Limestone.	Ballydonohoe, Ballyteige, Ballycastell, Ballyconnoe North, Ballyconnoe South, Ballyisheen Beg, Ballyinsheen More, Ballyneillan, Caherbarnagh, Caherbullog, Cahercloggaun, Cahermaan, Cahermakerrila, Cooleabeg, Cooleamore, Coolmeen, Cragreagh, Cullaun, Derreen South, Gowlaun, Killeany, Kilmoon East, Kilmoon West, Larheenbeg, Lisdoonvarna, Lisheenagh, Lislarheenmore, Lismorahaun,	St. Brendan's/Poulnagollum includes St. Brendan's Well near Lisdoonvarna, the main rising for a significant area of karstic drainage focused on the Poulnagollum – Poulelva cave system on the eastern side of Slieve Elva, the intermediate Killeany rising and the proven drainage from the Cullaun caves (Cullaun 0-3) on the western side of Poulacapple. The Poulnagollum –Poulelva cave system is Ireland's longest cave system. With approximately 14km total passage, much of which is active streamway, this cave system exhibits many features of interest revealing a complex history of development. The St. Brendan's - Poulnagollum site also includes a number of less developed, simple canyon type and supposedly postglacial streamways in the caves of Cullaun on the east of the site. This site has a complex history relating to at least one previous glacial advance and retreat. There is major scope for research, both underground and on the surface, of the various phases of development of the karst history of the valley.

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
St. Brendan's Well	51	R 13 98	Lower Clare Shales, Namurian in age.	Knockaunvickteera	St. Brendan's Well is located about 1 mile east of Lisdoonvarna along Gowlaun Stream. The lower Clare Shales are exposed in this stream overlying the Carboniferous Limestone of Hodson (1954). According to Hodson (1954) one of the more notable features of exposures of the Clare Shales in the Lisdoonvarna area is the reduction of the Phosphate Group to a few inches and the occurrence of faunal band rich in goniatites. The site also shows a diverse cephalopod fauna within concretions or nodules at the exposure together with a rich conodont fauna. The area indicates the attenuated nature of the northern Clare Shales, and the junction between the Upper and Lower Carboniferous. It is one of the few places in Ireland in which this horizon is exposed.
Tomeens	58	R 465 810	Unroofed and partially roofed river cave developed within Waulsortian limestone	Milltown, Kiltanon	The Tomeens consists of a linear river cave with unroofed, partially roofed and fully roofed sections, the unroofed sections resulting from roof collapse. It has a number of stream oxbows and dry oxbows. The process is still in progress, and will ultimately result in the cave becoming an

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					open canyon with the river down-cutting the limestone bed.
Toonagh Quarry,	57	R 303 838	Active limestone quarry with Burren Formation, Carboniferous, Viséan Limestone	Ballybrody, Drummina, Toonagh Commons	This quarry, 3.5km north of Ennis off the main Ennistymon road on the Corofin road, is the best representative section in the County, other than karstic exposures in the Burren, for the typical Clare Burren Formation. The broad dip of the beds, and features of the overall sequence can be seen in an always changing quarry.
Tuamgraney	58	R637 831	Carboniferous limestone with karstic features		Rock outcrop in the Garden of Remembrance in the village displaying some fine beds of Carboniferous limestone, with a moderate dip of about 30 degrees to the north west. They are characterized by solution runnels called karren, down the surfaces, more usually seen in the Burren.
Turkenagh	51	R 3387 9246	Mushroom rocks – isolated wave worn stones in limestone pavement area, adjacent to turlough.	Turkenagh	Mushroom stones are thought to have formed when lakes existed for periods long enough for water to dissolve the limestone below the lake level. Emergent limestone above the lake level was not dissolved. At Turkenagh it appears that the lake is actively still forming mushroom stones at

Site Name	Sheet No. 1:50,000	Grid Ref.	Principal characteristics/critical feature(s)/key words	Townland(s)/district	Summary description
					high water levels by dissolution of limestone pavement. They may in fact represent what many other sites were like at an early stage in their development, with residual mushrooms being an advanced state.
Vigo Cave	51	R 26051 90518	Ancient, abandoned vadose cave exposure site.	Noonan	Vigo is a significant cave unrelated to present day topography and containing entrance and deep cave sediments. The cave is unusual as it runs almost in a straight, SSW direction beneath the Namurian Shale cover. It has one of the best undisturbed cave entrance facies in Ireland with considerable potential for fruitful excavation. The complementary interior cave sediments together with the distinctive morphology of the ancient cave make it a valuable karst heritage landform. Recent calcite dating indicated a minimum age of at least 6,000 years for the cave.

Appendix 4 Architectural Conservation Areas

Location	Description
Ballynacally	<p>Ballynacally is a very attractive, small, estuary village with pleasant stone buildings and well maintained public spaces. The approach road from Ennis is particularly pleasing with its perfect 18th century estate walls, gate lodges and the spectacular ruin of the old McMahon castle of Dangan (Daingean Máigh Builc) with the upper portion still supported by a narrow staircase as it was in 1837.</p> <p>Little appears to have changed since the 1830s. The Post Office is still in the same building. The old National School dated 1843 is now a parish hall and "The Range" estate cottages, on the Fair Green are restored and inhabited.</p> <p>The village contains many items of architectural heritage interest including the double arch bridge over the river, shown on the 1787 Grand jury Map, which may be of a late mediaeval date with original stone parapet walls. The old fair green is a public park with seating, surrounded by early 19th century buildings. Most buildings date from 18th and 19th centuries.</p>
Ballyvaughan Village Centre	<p>Village centre consisting of 18th and 19th century two storey houses accommodating a hotel, pubs, shops and restaurants and also recent developments such as thatched cottage-type holiday homes.</p>
Ballyvaughan Auxiliary Workhouse	<p>The auxiliary workhouse is the only surviving workhouse in County Clare. The complex comprises a quadrangle surrounded by terraced single-storey stone, gabled houses which has retained most of its mid 19th century character and has potential for development as a unique residential complex.</p>
Cappa (Kilrush)	<p>The village of Cappa comprises a fine stone quay and storm protected pier which is one of the few havens for boats and shipping on this part of the Atlantic coast. The pilot station is still housed in the original coast guard station which was built between 1760 and 1836. Many of the terraced houses to the North East of the pier are shown on the 1st Edition Ordnance Map 1839 and may date from the previous century. Also shown on this map is Cappa Lodge (Protected Structure) and the Square (Former Fort and Military Barracks – Protected Structure).</p>

Location	Description
	<p>This is a most attractive coastal village with high quality buildings, masonry structures and walls. The original terrace of two storey houses is well maintained</p>
<p>Carrigaholt</p>	<p>Carrigaholt is a very attractive late 18th and early 19th century fishing settlement on the Loop Head peninsula, which has virtually remained unchanged since the 1830s. The village comprises three streets, the longest of which is West Street, running west from the harbour and bisected by Main Street towards the bridge and Chapel Street towards the early 19th century Roman Catholic Church.</p> <p>The village fabric consists of terraces of single storey, gabled, stone, three and four bay houses, which were originally thatched, with some two storey houses and shops between. Many of these display exceptionally high quality external plaster-work, including shop and pub fronts, moulded window surrounds, ornamental string courses, etc.</p>
<p>Clarecastle</p>	<p>Clarecastle village retains much of its 18th and 19th century fabric and character. The Castle which dominates the entrance to the village from the Newmarket-on-Fergus direction was built on an island in the Fergus in the 13th century. Much of its original structure, including gate tower, curtain wall and machicolated, mediaeval, postern gate, remains, while later additions, in the form of the mid 18th century barrack buildings, survive and have been repaired. This historic complex has, for the most part, retained its character and integrity, in that no new development has occurred on the island since the late 18th century.</p> <p>Other structures of architectural merit in the village include 19th century terraces and warehouses on Quay Road, 18th and 19th century terraces on Main St. and the mid 19th century harbour, consisting of an extensive, stone quay with stone bollards. The extent of the old village has remained greatly unchanged since the publication of the Co. Clare Grand Jury Map in 1787.</p> <p>Also contributing to the amenity and character of Clarecastle village are St Peter and Paul's Catholic Church, built 1839, The National School, built in the late 19th century and recently extended and a very attractive local authority housing estate - St. Michael's Terrace, comprising twelve semi-detached houses with high gables, large chimney-stacks and cantilevered concrete shelters over entrance doors, facing a tree-lined green.</p>

Location	Description
Corofin	Area identified for its traditional shopfronts and their contribution to a traditional street façade. The overall quality of the area is of sufficient importance to require special care.
Ennis – Former Our Lady’s Hospital Complex	<p>This extensive complex of ashlar-limestone buildings, originally known as The County Lunatic Asylum, was completed in 1868. Although many additions have since been made to the original buildings it still retains all of its original structures. These were invariably built using high quality materials, techniques and design, which with the large open areas of lawn and vegetation create an illusion of tranquillity and space.</p> <p>The complex contains eight protected structures including the former hospital, gate-lodge, gate-piers, boundary wall, mid 20th century chapel, stone water tower, former FÁS offices and former gasometer building.</p>
Ennis Terraces: 6no. ACAs	<p>St. Claire’s Terrace, Clonroad (c.1935)</p> <p>Terrace of single-storey houses, New Road (c.1870)</p> <p>Terrace of single-storey houses, beside the Old Barracks, Kilrush Road (c.1870)</p> <p>Terrace of single-storey houses, Station Road / Clonroad (1928)</p> <p>St. Flannan’s Terrace, Clare Road, 1904 and Clonroad More (1912)</p> <p>St. Patrick’s Terrace, Limerick Road (c.1890)</p> <p>The above, six ACAs consist of terraces of single and two storey houses constructed between 1870 and 1935. Although less formal than many other buildings in Ennis their simple and well proportioned design and their use of natural and local building materials give them a high visual amenity value which makes a considerable contribution to the character of the various approaches to the town.</p>
Ennis – Town Centre	Ennis is a town which has steadily developed since the mid thirteenth century. Although many changes have occurred in the town since the mediaeval period, it still retains its ancient character to a great extent. This is indicated by its narrow streets, stone buildings, laneways, bow-ways etc. Due to the fact that much of the centre of Ennis existed before the year 1700 it is designated as an Archaeological Zone (No. CL033-082-, Historic Town) in The Record of Monuments and Places, published the

Location	Description
	<p>National Monuments Services of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.</p> <p>The older part of Ennis, which for the most part consists of narrow, winding streets and lanes, following the pattern of the River Fergus, predominantly dates from the 13th to the 18th centuries. This is confined to the area around Abbey, O'Connell and Parnell Streets while the later impressive public and private buildings of the 19th century are found toward the outer boundaries of this ACA. These include the fine Georgian buildings of Bindon St, the mills and corn-stores of Cornmarket Street and the classical Courthouse and the nearby attractive simple formality of Steele's Terrace to the north.</p>
Ennistymon	<p>The present town of Ennistymon for the most part dates from the late 18th and early 19th centuries and comprises three main streets (Main St, Parliament St. and Bridge St.). The town is renowned for the survival of many of its traditional wooden shopfronts and stone slate roofs quarried from Liscannor and Doolin. The town contains 42 protected structures, many of which are being conserved and repaired.</p>
Kilfenora	<p>The village contains many 18th and 19th century two storey shops and town houses and has retained its unique market village character. Beside the market square stands the 12th century cathedral which has recently been restored. Kilfenora was once known as the "City of the Crosses" from its numerous illuminated carved limestone crosses. The former importance of the village is evident from the numerous forts, castles and 18th century houses which surround it. A large central area of Kilfenora has been designated as an ACA, recognising the historical and architectural importance of the townscape and layout of the core area.</p>
Kilkee	<p>Kilkee has retained its unique character as a 19th century bathing place. The town contained several protected structures and many fine buildings. A large area of the town centre is designated as an ACA, recognising the historical and architectural importance of the townscape and layout of the core area.</p>
Kilkishen	<p>The village core is designated as an ACA, recognising the historical importance of the town and the architectural importance of the townscape and layout of the core, most of which remains intact. There are, however, a number of derelict sites within this area which detract from the overall character of the streetscape.</p>

Location	Description
Killadysert	<p>The town centre has retained much of its character as an agricultural and estuary market town and has grown very little since first surveyed in 1839. There are four protected structures within the ACA and it has an attractive streetscape. The town centre has been designated as an ACA, recognising the historical and architectural importance of the townscape and the layout of the core area.</p>
Killaloe	<p>The town core has been designated as an ACA. The street pattern in Killaloe today is very similar to that shown on the Grand Jury Map of 1787 and it is likely that many of the existing houses and shops date from before that period. By 1837 the town had 300 houses and the town of Killaloe today has not changed greatly from that time. The town still retains its urban character and many of its ancient and later public buildings still remain. Killaloe comprises, for the most part, two storey buildings constructed of rendered, local sandstone rubble with Killaloe-Portroe slate roofs. These are invariably gabled with roof pitch of about 40 degrees. Large wide chimneys of stone or brick sit on the ridge of roofs and windows are mostly of wooden sliding sash type. Some examples of sash windows with small panes and light glazing bars are still to be found, particularly on the rear of buildings or in back lanes. Many fine 18th and 19th century formal, detached houses are also found near the town.</p>
Kilmihil	<p>Kilmihil village grew as a small market town in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and the townscape retains much of its existing character. St. Michael's church is a protected structure and the village core has been designated as an ACA, recognising the historical and architectural importance of the townscape and layout of the core area.</p>
Kilrush	<p>Kilrush is a very attractive and prosperous market town with a vibrant marina for fishing and leisure craft. The streets and squares are well laid out and most of its built fabric consists of two and three storey houses and shops over 150 years old. Many of the old shopfronts remain and are of a high standard in design and materials.</p> <p>The town and its environs contain thirty seven protected structures, including such fine public buildings as The Market House (1808), St. Senan's former Church of Ireland (1813), St. Senan's Catholic Church (1835), The Courthouse (1830), The Mercy Convent (1860) and the Vandeleur Walled Gardens (1808). Kilrush is one of only two towns in Clare designated "Heritage Town" status by the Tourist Board. It has</p>

Location	Description
	retained its special character as a west of Ireland, maritime and market town.
Labasheeda	<p>The village of Labasheeda comprises one long street of single and two storey houses and shops, most of which date from the 18th and early 19th centuries. The village does not appear to have expanded significantly since the 1830s when the 1st Edition OS map was surveyed, although some old buildings have been demolished and replaced by modern structures.</p> <p>The village extends in an easterly direction, parallel to the shore, from the old Catholic Church to the former 18th century Cloonkerry House. The street commands an elevated position with pleasant views of the Shannon Estuary. Labasheeda has a small early 19th century quay, a short distance south of the main street. This was a busy harbour in the late 19th century, with a regular ferry and cargo service to Foynes. Most of the larger two storey buildings are concentrated at the eastern side of the village, near the quay, with many retaining high quality wooden and render shopfronts.</p>
Lisdoonvarna	The present town of Lisdoonvarna is the product of a tourism boom during the late 19 th century. The town comprises, for the most part, well-designed and render-decorated Victorian buildings and an attractive and well laid out central market square. The Spa Wells complex to the south of the town has an attractive pump house and bathhouse built in the early 20 th century.
Miltown Malbay	Most of the present buildings in Miltown Malbay date from the early 19 th century. There is one long commercial street which includes some very fine plaster shop-fronts which replicate classical wooden traditional examples and date from the early decades of the 20 th century. The town has an attractive rural and urban quality and care must be taken to preserve its character and protect its historic fabric.
Mountshannon	The village core has been designated as an ACA. It consists of a single wide street, linked to the harbour, with solid, stone-gabled two storey houses on each side. Many of these date from the late 18 th century and still retain their traditional character. The buildings of the 18 th and 19 th centuries in Mountshannon are constructed of local sandstone, giving the village a cosy, welcoming appearance. The predominant roofing slate is a local grey-green quartzite slate, quarried during the 18 th century, and commonly known as “Killaloe slates”.

Location	Description
Newmarket-on-Fergus	The town core has been designated as an ACA. Newmarket-on-Fergus is a long-established settlement and its layout and townscape retain much of its 18 th and 19 th century character.
O'Briensbridge	The village core has been designated as an ACA in acknowledgement of its unique 18th century character and relatively uniform streetscape.
Quin	In acknowledgement of Quin's outstanding architectural heritage, the village core has been designated as an ACA. This designation is designed to positively assist the conservation management of the central area which is a considerable economic asset to the village in terms of its tourist profile.
Scarriff	The town existed by 1780 when the Grand Jury Map of Clare was being surveyed. The present town comprises one main street rising from the bridge over the River Graney to a triangular town "square". The houses are predominantly two storey gabled structures, built of local rubble sandstone with a lime render finish and sash windows. Many are still roofed with local Killaloe/Portroe slate and most still contain their one-over-one late 19 th century wooden sliding sash windows.
Scattery Island	<p>Scattery Island (Inis Cathaigh) has been inhabited since prehistory and is almost unique in that it contains substantial vestiges of buildings from many periods spanning almost two millenia. The island has a unique character in that, although practically all of its buildings are derelict or in ruins, it contains important structures from many periods in Irish history from Early Christian to the Napoleonic era. Scattery could be described as a microcosm of Irish history and archaeology and its buildings are excellent examples of Irish vernacular, ecclesiastical, military and coastal-defence architecture through the ages.</p> <p>The island is traditionally associated with St. Senan, a sixth century hermit who is credited with bringing Christianity to West Clare. The island contains the remains of many churches dating from this period, a holy well, a round tower and two mediaeval cemeteries. It was the scene of battles between the Vikings and the army of Brian Ború, High King of Ireland during the 10th and early 11th centuries. Some of the ecclesiastical remains may date to the mediaeval period or later. The remains of a 16th century tower house of the O'Catháin family can be seen near the pier.</p>

Location	Description
	<p>The village, on the east of the island is mostly in ruins. During the 18th and 19th centuries it was inhabited, principally, by herders, farmers, fishermen and estuary pilots. During the Napoleonic Wars, a coastal artillery battery was constructed at the southern end of the island by the War Department. It is still an impressive fortification with a central, rectangular “bomb proof” blockhouse surrounded by gun emplacements, a dry moat and drawbridge. Beside the battery is a 19th century lighthouse (c.1867) and lightkeepers’ house.</p> <p>The whole island of Scattery is designated as an archaeological complex, No. CL067-024- in the Record of Monuments and Places. This designation includes fifteen sub-monuments including eight Early Christian and Mediaeval Churches, a walled enclosure, a Round Tower, a Holy Well, a Castle, a Graveyard, a Battery and a potential archaeological site. Its designation as an Architectural Conservation Area gives the unique built environment of the island additional protection.</p>
Sixmilebridge	<p>The town core of Sixmilebridge has been designated as an ACA. This designation recognises the historical importance of the town as an early industrial settlement on the O’Garney river and the architectural importance of the townscape and layout of the core area which reflects the past.</p>
Tuamgraney	<p>The village is a pleasant hamlet consisting of two storey, three bay, gabled houses and commercial premises with wooden sash windows and Killaloe slate roofs. The buildings and boundary walls are constructed of local sandstone blocks, giving the structures a soft, warm texture not found in the west or south of the County. The village centre appears to have been unaffected by modern development and materials and still retains its 18th century market village character.</p>
Tulla	<p>The village addresses the ruin of an ancient church and graveyard which commands the highest point in the village. This was likely a fortified site in prehistoric times and was once the site of a late mediaeval castle or tower house. Now it is dominated by the ruins of the early 18th century Church of Ireland and some sparse remains of an earlier one, reputedly built by St. Mochulla in the 7th century.</p> <p>The element which contributes most to the character of Tulla is its unusual elevated position, high above the surrounding landscape, which is reminiscent of fortified hill villages of the Iberian and Italian peninsulas. The streets, which slope down from the centre sit easily on this hillside location by the use of incremental variations in floor and roof</p>

Location	Description
	<p>levels, giving a “deck of cards effect” to the terraces of two storey shops and houses.</p> <p>The buildings of Tulla are predominantly two storey, gabled, two and three bay houses dating from the 18th and 19th centuries. Many contain early wooden or plaster shopfronts with ornate moulding and detailing.</p>

Appendix 5 Scenic Routes

SCENIC ROUTES	
Number	Location
1	Coast Road from County boundary (along the Kinvarra Road) to Quilty including the R479 spur to Doolin
2	N67 from Ballyvauhan to Corkscrew Hill
3	R480 from Ballyvaughan to Leamaneh Castle
4	R476 from Leamaneh Castle to Corofin
5	R476 from Leamaneh Castle to Corofin
6	Series of roads from junction of R476 through Porkabinna to Castletown and south west to Seshymore, northwards from Carran through Rannagh townland
7	Road from Caherconnell to Carran
8	Series of roads from Carran through Fahee South, north to Glencolmcille south, northwards to Keelhilla (cross), westwards through Pullagh, Coolnatullagh and Coskeam to Fahee South
9	Road from townland of Turlough to Aghawinnaun
10	From church in New Quay, Behagh to end of public road
11	From junction at Fanore and R477 south eastwards to Lislareenbeg
12	From road junction Formoyle east, southwards to Lismorahaun
13	Series of roads southwards from junction at Fannoremore to junction at Blake's mountain and westwards to junction with R477 at Corofin
14	Series of roads from junction at Ballynalacken Castle through townlands of Ballynalacken, Carrownacleary, Ballynahown, Poulmagun and Cloughan
15	R474 from Connolly to Milltown Malbay
16	R487 from Kilfearagh to T-junction before Breaghva
17	R487 from outside Carrigaholt to Loop Head
18	Along coast road from Carrigaholt to Doonaha
19	Coast road south east of Cappagh to Carrowdotia South
20	R473 from outside Labasheeda to T-junction before Kiladysert
21	Road through Ballysallagh east, southwards to Ballycally
22	From Brickhill Bridge north east to road junction at Reaskcamoge
23	Road from Cratloe north east through Gallows Hill to Glennagross
24	Views in and out of Lough Cullaunyheeda
25	Views in and out of Doon Lough
26	R466 between Broadford and O'Briensbridge
27	R463 from O'Briensbridge through Killaloe to outside Ogonnelloe
28	R463 from Tuamgraney to Mountshannon
29	Roads surrounding Lough Graney
30	R487 from junction at Carrounaveehaun along the coast road to Kilkee
31	Wood Road, Corofin
32	Road from Church at Ballylaghan crossroads as far as the crossroads at Caherhurly (part of the East Clare Way)
33	Road running west from Bealaha Bridge as far as its junction with the N67

34	R487 from the junction with the R488 south to T-junction at Killeenagh
35	Road from Feard past the Bridges of Ross to the R487

Public Rights of Way

Public rights of way which give access to seashore, mountain, lakeshore, riverbank or other places of natural beauty or recreational utility:

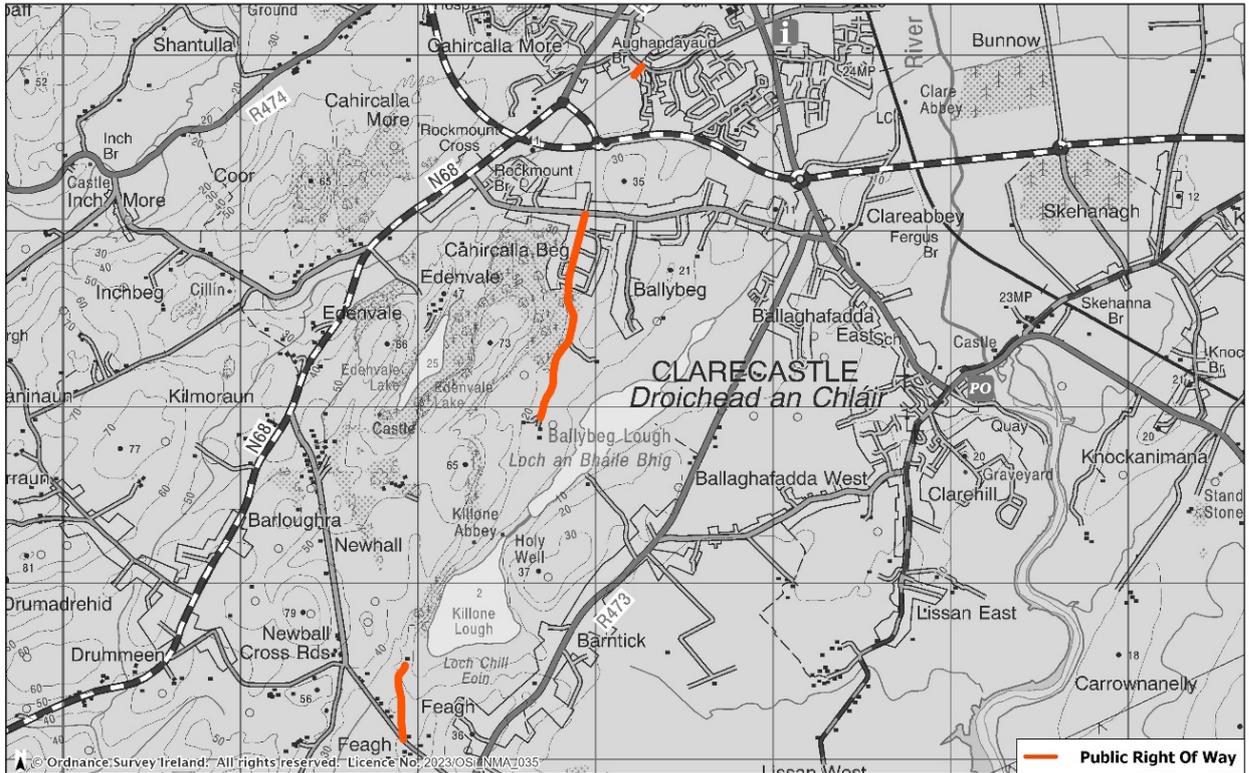
- Turret Lane, Kilrush – connecting Grace Street and Vandeleur Demesne
- The Rocky Road, Ennis (part of)

The inclusion of a public right of way in this Plan is based on evidence of such a right of way existing and in particular of its compliance with the specific requirements of Section 10(2) (o) of the Act. It does not affect the existence of validity of any other public right of way which are not included in this Plan. Public Rights of Way are identified overleaf on Map 6.1 A & B.

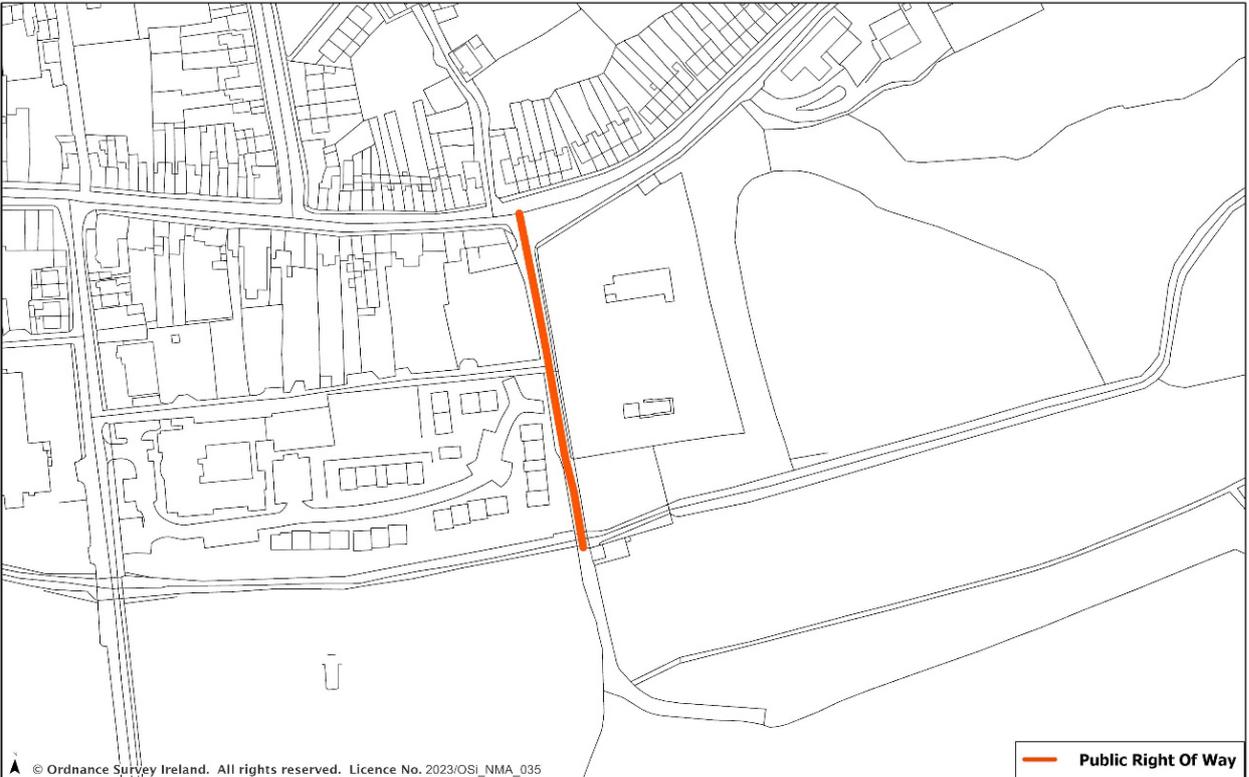
Recreational Routes

County Clare has a wealth of recreational routes both in urban and rural areas which explore some of the county's outstanding natural beauty and heritage. These routes include the following and are identified overleaf on Map 6.2

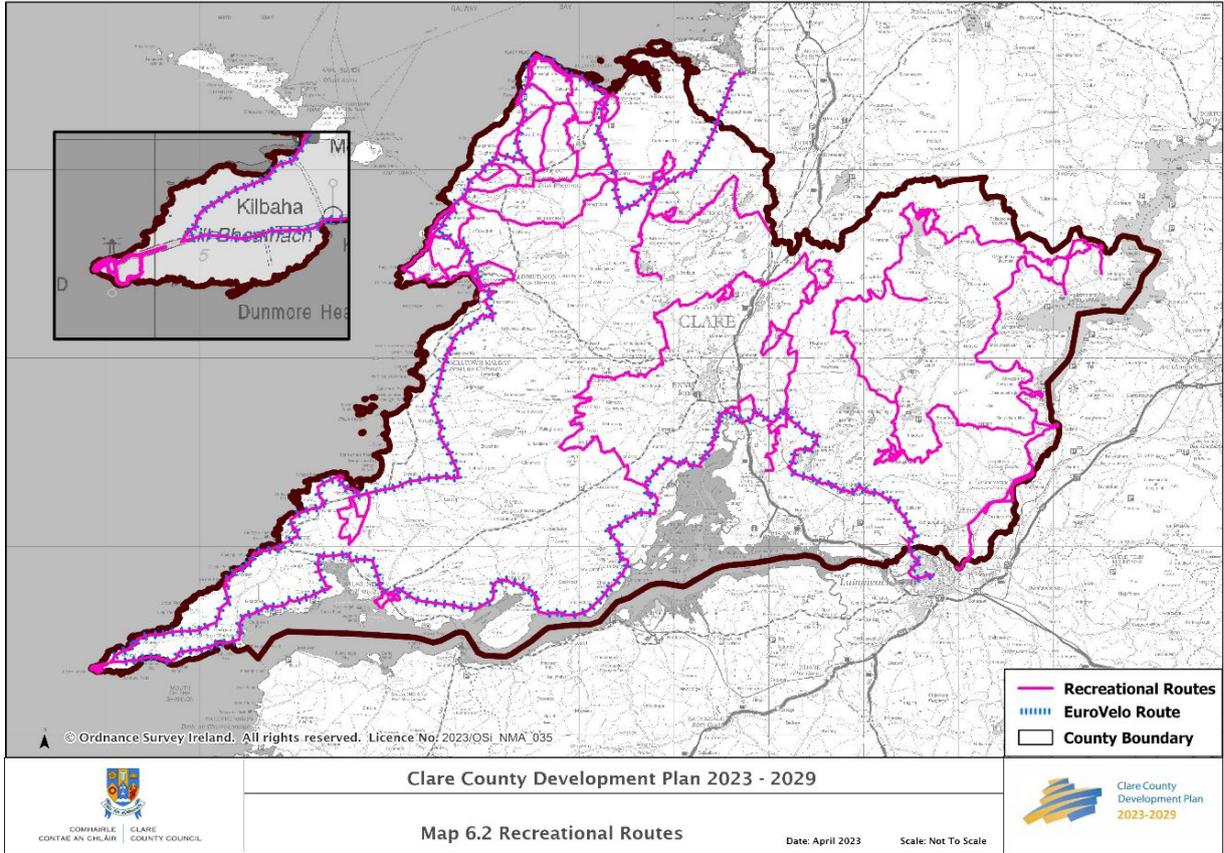
- EuroVelo Route – **Cycling**
- Doolin Cycle Hub Loop 1,2,3,4 – **Cycling**
- Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk - **Link to National Waymarked Way**
- Carron Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Caher Valley Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- O'Briensbridge - Old Barge loop, Parteen Weir, Errinagh Bridge - **National Loop Walk**
- Ruan - Dromore Wood Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Ballyvaughan - Wood Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Tullaheer Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Ballinruan Loops - **National Loop Walk**
- Ballyvaughan - Black Head loop **National Loop Walk**
- Templecronan Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Doonbeg Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Lough Avalla Farm Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Ballinruan Loops – **National Loop Walk**
- Gortnamearacaun Loop - **National Loop Walk**
- Mid Clare Way - **National Waymarked Trail**
- Burren Way - **National Waymarked Trail**
- East Clare Way - **National Waymarked Trail**
- 12 O'Clock Hills Looped Walks – Blue, Red, Purple Route-**Other**
- Fanore Ballyvaughan Trek – **Other**
- Vandeleur Garden Walkway – **Other**
- Lough Derg Walk – **Other**
- Loop Headland and Lighthouse – **Other**




Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029
Map 6.1A Public Right of Way - Rocky Road (Ennis)
 Date: April 2023 Scale: Not To Scale
 




Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029
Map 6.1B Public Right of Way - Turret Lane (Kilrush)
 Date: April 2023 Scale: Not To Scale
 



Appendix 7 Plans, Policies and Guidelines to which the Development Plan must have regard

Under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended the Planning Authority is required to append a statement to the development plan including information which demonstrates how the Planning Authority has implemented the policies and objectives of the Minister contained in the Guidelines when considering their application to the area or part of the area of the development plan.

Alternatively, if the Council has formed the opinion that it is not possible, because of the nature of characteristics of the area of the development plan, to implement certain policies or objectives of the Minister contained in the Guidelines, the statement shall give reasons for the forming of the opinion and why the policies and objectives of the Minister has not been so implemented.

The required statement in relation to the Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 is set out below. The Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029 is referred to hereunder as 'the plan'.

<u>Section 28 Guidelines</u>	<u>Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029</u>
Guidelines for Local Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on Carrying Out Environmental Impact Assessments DHPLG (2018)	The purpose of the Guidelines is to provide practical guidance to Planning Authorities and the Board on legal and procedural issues arising from the requirement to carry out an EIA in relevant cases. The Guidelines relate essentially to the responsibilities on planning and the Board as contained in the current section 172 of the Planning Act 2000. They are not relevant to the preparation process of the Plan.
Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015, DoEHLG	This document has informed Chapters 16, 17 and 18 and Appendix A1.
Appropriate Assessment of Plans and Projects in Ireland – Guidance for Planning Authorities (2009)	The preparation of the Plan has had regard to this guidance document. A Natura Impact Report was prepared and accompanies the Plan.
Strategic Environmental Assessment: Guidelines for Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities (2022) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Guidelines (2004).	The preparation of the Plan has had regard to these Guidelines. Strategic Environmental Assessment was initiated with the preparation of an SEA Environmental Report accompanying this plan.
Architectural Heritage Protection – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2004), as updated (2011)	Chapter 16 <i>Architectural, Archaeological and Culture Heritage</i> has been prepared in accordance with the Guidelines.

<u>Section 28 Guidelines</u>	<u>Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029</u>
Implementing Regional Planning Guidelines – Best Practice Guidance (2010)	Chapter 3 <i>Core Strategy</i> , Chapter 4 <i>Urban & Rural Settlement Strategy</i> and Chapter 5 <i>Housing</i> sets out the policy objectives to ensure that the Core Strategy requirements of the Plan are consistent with national and regional policy (National Planning Framework 2018, Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region) as required by the 2010 Guidance document (which refers to the former national and regional strategy).
Childcare Facilities: Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001) as updated by Circular letter PL3/2016 (2016)	Chapter 10 <i>Sustainable Communities and Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines</i> has addressed the provision of community facilities across the county in accordance with the Guidelines and Circular PL3/2016.
Development Management Guidelines (2007)	<i>Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines</i> has been prepared having considered the Development Management Guidelines.
Development Plan – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2007)	The Development Plan Guidelines for Planning Authorities have informed the preparation of this Development Plan.
Guidance Note on Core Strategies (2010)	Chapter 3 <i>Core Strategy</i> has been carried out in accordance with these guidelines.
Quarries and Ancillary Activities (2004)	The role and impact of quarries has been considered and incorporated into the development plan in accordance with the Guidelines in <i>Chapter 8 Rural Development & Natural Resources</i>
Provision of Schools and the Planning System (2008)	Chapter 10 <i>Sustainable Communities and Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines</i> .
Retail Planning Guidelines (2012)	Chapter 6 <i>Economic Development</i> and Chapter 7 <i>Retail</i> refers to the Guidelines and contains the policy objectives pertaining to retail.

Section 28 Guidelines	Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029
Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines (2005)	Chapter 4 <i>Urban & Rural Settlement Strategy</i> , Chapter 5 <i>Housing</i> , Chapter 8 <i>Rural Development & Natural Resources</i> , Chapter 10 <i>Sustainable Communities</i> and Chapter 14 <i>Landscape</i> sets out the rural housing policy objectives for the county. These policy objectives incorporate the recommendations of the Guidelines.
Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas (2009)	These Guidelines have been considered in the context of Chapter 17 <i>Towns & Villages</i> , Chapter 18 <i>Design & Placemaking</i> and Appendix 1 <i>Development Management Guidelines</i> to encourage the provision of high-quality design and density in the settlement areas of the county in accordance with the Guidelines.
The Planning System and Flood Risk Management – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2009)	An SFRA has been carried out for the county having regard to the Guidelines. The SFRA document accompanies the plan and identified areas at risk of flooding. Policy objectives in relation to flood risk have also been included in the plan.
Spatial Planning and National Roads Guidelines (2012)	Chapter 4 <i>Urban & Rural Settlement Strategy</i> , Chapter 11 <i>Transport, Service Infrastructure and Energy</i> and Appendix 1 <i>Development Management Guidelines</i> contains a specific policy objective that alleviates national primary and secondary roads, outside of urban speed limits in accordance with these Guidelines.
Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (2013) as updated in 2019	Chapters 17 <i>Towns & Villages</i> , Chapter 18 <i>Design & Placemaking</i> and Appendix 1 <i>Development Management Guidelines</i> address these Guidelines set out provision of practical design measures to encourage more sustainable travel patterns in urban areas and best practice in the design of street networks and individual streets.
Urban Development and Building Heights – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2018)	Chapters 17 <i>Towns & Villages</i> , Chapter 18 <i>Design & Placemaking</i> and Appendix 1 <i>Development Management Guidelines</i> cover this item in accordance with the guidelines.

<u>Section 28 Guidelines</u>	<u>Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029</u>
Wind Energy Development Guidelines (2006 and draft 2019)	Chapter 2 Climate Action, Chapter 11 Transport, Service Infrastructure and Energy and Volume 6 Clare Renewable Energy Strategy has been formulated having regard to the Wind Energy Guidelines.
Development Contribution Schemes – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2013)	These guidelines have been considered in the making of the plan. It is recognised that the guidelines assist planning authorities in achieving a balance between the cost of the services provided and the need to support economic activity and renewal through the development contribution scheme.
National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015- 2025	Chapter 14 Landscape and the Landscape Character Assessment has taken cognisance of the National Landscape Strategy for Ireland 2015-2025 which recognises the importance of landscape protection and its interconnectivity with biodiversity and climate change.
Sustainable Urban Housing Design Standards for New Apartments (2015), as updated (2018)	These guidelines have been considered and complied with.
Quality Housing for Sustainable Communities – Design Guidelines (2007)	These guidelines have been considered and complied with throughout the plan making process.
Tree Preservation – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	These guidelines have been considered and complied with throughout the plan making process.
Telecommunications Antennae and Support Structures – Guidelines for Planning Authorities	Chapter 11 Transport, Service Infrastructure and Energy recognises the importance of critical communication infrastructure in accordance with these Guidelines.
Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change (2017)	The plan has been prepared in accordance with these Guidelines.

<u>Section 28 Guidelines</u>	<u>Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029</u>
<p>Best Practice Urban Design Manual (May 09) – Part 1 Best Practice Urban Design Manual (May 09) – Part 2</p>	<p>This Design Manual has informed the content of Chapters 17 and 18.</p>
<p>Rural Housing Policies and Local Need Criteria in Development Plans – Circular Letter SP/5/08</p>	<p>The Settlement Strategy outlined in chapter 4 of the plan is considered to be consistent with the above circular. Specifically, the criteria for determining a persons economic, social or exceptional need to live in a specific rural area.</p> <p>The above circular also reiterates the requirement in the 2005 Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines in respect of the promotion and preservation of the Irish language. The Plan includes an objective to provide for the linguistic and cultural heritage of the County through support for organisations involved in the continued promotion and preservation of the Irish language and culture.</p>
<p>Funfair Guidance, 2003</p>	<p>These Guidelines relate to the licensing and requirements for a specific type of land use – funfairs. They are not relevant to the preparation process of the plan.</p>
<p>Housing Options for Our Ageing Population: Policy Statement DHPLG and DoH (2019)</p>	<p>Chapters 5, 10, 11, 17, 18, and 19 makes reference to these guidelines which supports our ageing population in a way that will increase the accommodation options available and give meaningful choice in how and where people choose to live as they age.</p>
<p>Housing Supply Target Methodology for Development Planning. DHLGH (2020)</p>	<p>The Core Strategy of this Plan reflects the methodology set out in these Guidelines in Chapter 3 Core Strategy and Chapter 5 Housing.</p>
<p>Local Area Plans: Guidelines for Planning Authorities DECLG (2013)</p>	<p>Volume Three contain the policies and objectives for the settlements within each of the Municipal Districts covered by the Plan, are consistent with Volume One of the Plan, and reflect the provisions of these guidelines. The Plan is also consistent with higher level plans and strategies</p>

<u>Section 28 Guidelines</u>	<u>Clare County Development Plan 2023 - 2029</u>
Development Plans, Guidelines for Planning Authorities DHLGH (June 2022)	All aspects of the Plan is informed by this guidance, in particular the Core Strategy and the zoning of lands and policy objectives.
Part V of the Planning and Development Act 2000 – Guidelines DHPCLG (2017)	Chapter 5 Housing makes reference to these Guidelines and implements the relevant policies and objectives in the Development Plan.
Sustainable Urban Housing, Design Standards for New Apartments: Guidelines for Planning Authorities DHPLG (2020)	Chapter 5 Housing, Chapter 17 Towns & Villages, Chapter 18 Design & Placemaking and Appendix 1 Development Management Guidelines makes reference to these guidelines.
Universal Design Guidelines for Early Learning and Care Centres 2019	The plan makes reference to and is informed by these guidelines in Chapter 10 Sustainable Communities
Frameworks and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Government of Ireland 1999)	The plan is informed by these guidelines in Chapter 16 Architectural, Archaeological and Culture Heritage.
Archaeology and the Planning Process (Planning Leaflet 13,2021 (OPR)	The plan is informed by these guidelines in Chapter 16 Architectural, Archaeological and Culture Heritage.
OPR Practice Note 03 Planning Conditions (October 2022).	The plan is informed by these guidelines throughout.

Appendix 8 Housing Supply Target (HST) Worked Table

City/County Council	Annual Average Households		Total Households
A	ESRI NPF scenario projected new household demand 2017 to Plan end year, or quarter (pro-rata)		6,035
B	Actual new housing supply 2017 to Q3 2020		2,126
C	Homeless households (latest data), and unmet demand as at most recent Census	N/A	123
D	Plan Housing Demand = Total (A-B+C) (Projected ESRI NPF demand - new completions + Unmet demand)		4,032
E	Potential adjustment 1 to end 2026 portion of plan period to facilitate convergence to NPF strategy (where justified)	Mid-point between ESRI NPF and Baseline scenarios to 2026 in lieu of A above	Adjusted Total Demand
E1	ESRI Baseline scenario projected new household demand 2017 to Q4 2026		5,893
E2	ESRI NPF scenario projected new household demand 2027-Q3 2028		1,078
E3	Mid-point between ESRI NPF (A - E2) and baseline scenarios to Q4 2026 (E1)		5,425
	Adjusted Total Demand calculation based on E2 + E3 in lieu of A above... (E2+E3-B)+C		4,500



Appendix 9 Implementation and Monitoring

Chapter 2. Climate Action

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP2.1 Climate Action	✓		✓	✓		Implementation of the Climate Change Action Plan and the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework through a 'whole-of-Council' approach led by the Council's Climate Team working with the Regional Climate Action Offices / Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review progress made on the energy emissions balance for County Clare in terms of: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Need Use Transport Emissions Incorporate results into a Data Management System. No. of Climate Action awareness campaigns and public attendance.
CDP2.5 Decarbonisation Zone	✓	✓	✓			Physical Development Directorate	Identification of a Decarbonisation zone.
CDP2.6 Flood Risk Assessment & Management	✓		✓	✓		Development Management / Environment Section / Water Services / OPW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) No. of planning applications granted/refused within Coastal Settlement zoned areas. (b) No. of projects commenced/completed (a) Impact on surface water quality (b) No. of beach closures (c) No. of blue flags lost No. of exceedances of wastewater treatment emission limits
CDP2.10 Flood Relief Schemes	✓		✓	✓	✓	Physical Development Directorate	No. of flood schemes commenced/delivered
CDP2.12 Flood Risk Management, Green Infrastructure & Biodiversity	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Development Management /Heritage / Rural Development / Shannon Plan & Ennis LAP	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of green infrastructure plans and projects planned/commenced/completed. No. of Clare County Council/OPW flood risk management measures incorporating biodiversity

CDP2.14 Transition to a Low Carbon Economy & Society	✓	✓	✓	✓		Physical / Social / Rural / Economic Directorates / Clare Climate Change Adaptation Strategy 2019-2024	<p>1) Climate Change Funding (a) No. of funding applications made (b) No. of successful funding applications (c) Value of funding awarded</p> <p>2) No. of planning applications that are accompanied by EIA/NIS (a) All applications (b) those with EIA/NIS</p> <p>3) No. of planning applications for renewable energy and technology sources</p> <p>4) No. of projects/plans relating to active travel/mobility plans/greenways etc. planned/commenced/delivered.</p>
CDP2.15 Renewable Transport		✓	✓			Physical & Economic Development Directorate / Development Management	<p>1. No. of people walking/using public transport /other sustainable modes of travel i.e. changes of baseline data.</p> <p>2. No. of planning applications for larger developments that include EV points.</p> <p>3. No. of EV points included on CCC owned properties including public car parks</p>
CDP2.16 Community Energy	✓	✓	✓	✓		Environment / Rural Development	No. of Sustainable Energy Communities assisted/planned/established in the county
CDP2.17 Renewable Heat		✓	✓			Development Management	No. of planning applications for District Heating projects in the county and % granted
CDP2.18 Solar Energy		✓	✓			Development Management	<p>1. No. of planning applications for solar farms and % granted</p> <p>2. No. of planning applications for solar panels and % granted</p>
CDP2.19 Bio-Energy		✓	✓			Development Management	No. of planning applications for Bio-energy projects in the county and % granted
CDP2.20 Micro-Generation		✓	✓			Development Management	No. of planning applications for Micro-generation projects in the county and % granted



CDP2.21 Micro Hydroelectric Generation		√	√			Development Management	No. of planning applications for Micro Hydroelectric Generation projects in the county and % granted
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Chapter 3. Core Strategy

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP3.1 Core Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Development Management	Residential <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – No of new homes permitted/completed – No of new homes permitted considered as compact growth – No of houses permitted in small villages, clusters and the open countryside Commercial <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Permitted floorspace as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Office space (b) Industrial (c) Retail (d) Bulky
CDP3.3 Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment & Strategic Flood Risk Assessment	✓	✓	✓			Development Management / Environmental Officer	No. of planning applications that are accompanied by EIA/NIS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) All applications (b) those with EIA/NIS

Chapter 4. Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP4.1 Ennis	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consistency with Ennis Settlement Statement / Rural Development / Forward Planning Unit	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor progress made on the delivery of projects resulting from Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy 2. Delivery of Mobility Plan for Ennis 3. Completion of the annual town centre health check 4. No. of public realm projects planned/commenced/ delivered
CDP4.4 Shannon	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consistency with Shannon town and environs LAP 2012-2018 (extended)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Completion of a new local area plan for Shannon Town and Environs over the lifetime of the Plan 2. Monitor planning permissions granted and land availability
CDP4.10 Countryside	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Consistency with relevant Section of the CDP	No. of planning applications received on an annual basis and location of these sites in landscape types.
CDP4.12 Monitoring & Implementation of Settlement Strategy	✓	✓	✓			Development Management	No. of planning applications made, and developments completed in line with the Core Strategy
CDP4.14 New Single Houses in the Countryside within the 'Areas of Special Control'	✓	✓			✓	Development Management	No. of dwellings permitted / refused in these areas and Category of need
CDP4.15 New Single Houses in the Countryside Outside the 'Areas of Special Control'	✓	✓			✓	Development Management	No. of dwellings permitted / refused in these areas
CDP4.16 New Single Houses on Infill Sites in the Countryside	✓	✓			✓	Development Management	No. of dwellings permitted / refused in these areas
CDP4.17 Replacement of a Substandard Habitable House in the Countryside	✓	✓			✓	Development Management	No. of dwellings permitted / refused in these areas



CDP4.18 Refurbishment of a Derelict House/Structure in the Countryside	✓	✓			✓	Development Management	No. of dwellings permitted / refused in these areas
CDP4.19 New Single Holiday Homes in the Countryside	✓				✓	Development Management	No. of planning applications for holiday homes
CDP4.20 Clare Rural House Design Guide	✓	✓				Forward Planning Unit	Preparation and completion of a new/updated Clare Rural Design Guide

Chapter 5. Housing

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP5.1 Implementation of the Housing Strategy	✓	✓			✓	Housing Section/Development Management	Progress on/delivery of objectives set out in the Housing Strategy
CDP5.2 Facilitating to the Housing Needs of the Population	✓				✓	Housing Section/Development Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of persons removed from the Housing Register No. of social/affordable housing units constructed/acquired No. of persons on HAP/RAS Schemes No. of houses permitted in the county
CDP5.6 Emergency Accommodation	✓			✓	✓	Housing Section	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of persons provided with Emergency Accommodation No. of persons permanently housed.
CDP5.7 Unfinished Development & Taking in Charge	✓	✓		✓		Taking in Charge Team / Development Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of unfinished developments completed No. of developments taken in charge
CDP5.10 Traveller Accommodation	✓				✓	Implementation of the Clare County Council Traveller Accommodation Programme 2019-2024 / Housing Section / Development Management	Completion of a new Traveller Accommodation Plan within the lifetime of this CDP.
CDP5.14 Holiday Homes					✓	Development Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of planning applications granted for new holiday homes and express as a percentage of all new residential units permitted No. of planning applications granted for holiday homes via refurbishment/redevelopment etc. of existing units



Chapter 6. Economic Development

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP6.1 Economic Development & Enterprise	✓	✓		✓		Development Management / Economic Development / LEO / development agencies / LECP / Failte Ireland	1. No. of new jobs created in the county 2. No. of start-ups created in the county
CDP6.2 Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Clare County Council / LEO	Progress and delivery on actions set out in Regional Enterprise Plan
CDP6.3 Atlantic Economic Corridor	✓	✓		✓		Economic Development	1. No. of AEC projects planned/commenced/completed 2. (a)No. of applications for AEC funding (b)No. of successful applications for AEC funding (c)Value of funding awarded
CDP6.8 University of Limerick – Clare Campus Proposed Strategic Development Zone	✓	✓			✓	Strategic Projects Unit / Development Management / Other Stakeholders	1. Secure the designation of the Strategic Development Zone at University of Limerick - Clare Campus and progress to planning scheme 2. Progress on the reopening of the Errina Canal and the reinstatement of the riverside walkway 3. Progress on the Limerick to Scarriff blueway/greenway amenity path
CDP6.10 Shannon Estuary	✓	✓	✓			Strategic Projects Unit / Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary	No of planning Applications received in relation to strategic development Locations.
CDP6.12 Clare Digital Hub Network	✓		✓	✓	✓	Rural Development / Clare Digital Strategy 2023	No of digital hubs planned/commenced/completed
CDP6.15 Re-use of Brownfield Sites	✓	✓				Clare County Development Plan / Development Management / Economic Development	Creation of a county wide database for vacant or underutilised brownfield sites/buildings



CDP6.23 Home Based Economic Activity & Remote Working	✓	✓		✓		LEO / Development Management	No. of planning applications for home based economic activity
CDP6.26 Tourism	✓	✓	✓	✓		Tourism Office / Development Management	Monitor progress on and delivery of the Strategic Priorities set out in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030
CDP6.27 Data Centres		✓		✓		Development Management / Economic Development	No of planning applications granted/refused permission for data centres.



Chapter 7. Retail

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP7.1 Retail Strategy		✓		✓	✓	CCC / LCCC / Retail Strategy for the Limerick- Shannon Metropolitan Area and County Clare	Monitor the delivery of retail spaces in line with the Retail Strategy
CDP7.13 Retail Health Checks	✓			✓	✓	Forward Planning Unit	No. of retail health checks carried out
CDP7.16 Leisure & Entertainment Facilities	✓	✓				Development Management	No. of planning applications granted for leisure and entertainment facilities
CDP7.17 Edge-of-Centre Retail Development	✓	✓				Development Management	No. of planning applications where a sequential test was utilised to assess the impact on existing retail services.

Chapter 8. Rural Development & Natural Resources

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP8.3 Alternative Farm Enterprises		✓	✓	✓		Development Management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of planning applications for new rural and farm-related enterprises No. of planning applications for farm-based renewable energy technologies
CDP8.6 Rural Transport	✓	✓	✓		✓	Physical Development Directorate / National 'Action Plan for Rural Development'	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Expansion of the Local Link Rural Transport Programme, routes/passenger nos. No. of new rural transportation initiatives in the county
CDP8.7 Rural Broadband	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Rural Development Directorate / Clare Digital Strategy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor progress on the delivery of the National Broadband Plan Monitor progress on the delivery of Broadband Connection Points No. of DigiClare Digital Hubs planned/commenced/ delivered
CDP8.10 Forestry		✓	✓			Coillte / Planning	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Area of forestry planted lands in the county No. of planning applications for new ancillary forestry enterprises
CDP8.11 Bio-Energy		✓	✓			Development Management	No of planning applications for new bio-energy developments and associated rural enterprises in the county
CDP8.12 Renewable Energy Development		✓	✓			Development Management	No. of planning applications granted for renewable energy developments (on and offshore)



Chapter 9. Tourism

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP9.1 County Clare Tourism Strategy	✓			✓		Rural Development Directorate / Tourism Office / County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030	Progress on and delivery of the Strategic Priorities set out in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030
CDP9.6 Tourism Corridors		✓			✓	Tourism Office / other stakeholders	Progress on and delivery of key tourism-related plans and projects such as the Tourism Masterplan for the River Shannon and the Doolin Pier Masterplan and visitor services centre at Doolin Pier.
CDP9.21 Tourism in Ennis & its Environs		✓				Tourism Office / Development management	Monitor Purple Flag accreditation for Ennis
CDP9.22 Tourism in South Clare & the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area		✓				Tourism Office / Development management	Monitor progress on and delivery of a flagship international-scale tourism project in Bunratty
CDP9.23 Tourism in East Clare		✓				Tourism Office / Development management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on the implementation of the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan 2. Progress on the implementation of the Shannon Tourism Masterplan 2020-2030
CDP9.24 Tourism in North Clare & The Burren		✓				Tourism Office / Development management	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor progress on the implementation of the Cliffs of Moher Strategy 2040 2. Progress on and completion of the Corofin Streetscape Enhancement Strategy
CDP9.25 Tourism in West Clare		✓				Tourism Office / Development management	Progress made on the delivery of improved tourist experience at key sites such as Vandeleur Gardens, Loop Head Lighthouse etc.



CDP9.26 West Clare Railway Greenway	✓	✓	✓		✓	Tourism Office / Development management	Progress on and delivery of the West Clare Railway Greenway
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Chapter 10. Sustainable Communities

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP10.2 Local Community Development Committee	✓	✓			✓	Clare County Council CLDC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on actions and stakeholder initiatives identified in the Clare LECP (a) No. of funding applications made for regeneration initiatives in disadvantaged areas of the county (b) No. of successful funding applications (c) Value of funding awarded No. of planning applications granted for new social enterprises in the county
CDP10.4 Diverse & Socially Inclusive Society	✓				✓	Clare County Council Key Stakeholders	Progress on and delivery of Actions set out in the Migrant Integration Strategy
CDP10.6 Age-Friendly County	✓				✓	Clare County Council Age Friendly Clare Development Officer Old Peoples Council HSE An Garda Síochána	Progress on and delivery of Actions set out in the Clare Age Friendly Strategy
CDP10.7 Community Facilities	✓				✓	Clare County Council Community Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Completion of the inventory of community, social and cultural facilities No. of planning applications granted for new community facilities in the county
CDP10.8 Community Gardens & Allotments	✓		✓		✓	Clare County Council Community Groups	No. of community gardens and allotments provided in the county
CDP10.11 Recreational Routes	✓		✓		✓	Clare County Council Irish Rail Community Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on and delivery of new and upgraded recreational routes and associated infrastructure in the county Completion of heritage audits for the county
CDP10.16 Primary & Secondary Education	✓				✓	Department of Education	No. of planning applications granted for primary and secondary educational facilities in the county



CDP10.17 Higher Education Institutes	√				√	Department of Education Clare County Council	Progress on and delivery of a Regional Design Centre
CDP10.20 Health Services	√				√	HSE	No. of planning applications granted for healthcare facilities in the county
CDP10.22 Libraries	√				√	Clare County Council	Completion and operation of new library facilities in Ennis



Chapter 11. Transport, Service Infrastructure & Energy

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP11.1 Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates Infrastructure Providers	Monitor the progress made on the delivery of infrastructural projects identified in the RSES
CDP11.2 Transport Planning	✓		✓		✓	Physical Directorate and Municipal Districts, NTA	Monitor progress made on the delivery of Smart Travel projects in the county
CDP11.3 Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy & Local Transport Planning	✓	✓	✓		✓	Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates, NTA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on and delivery of Actions of the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy 2. Progress on and delivery of Actions of the Local Transport Plan for Ennis and Environs
CDP11.5 Walking & Cycling	✓		✓		✓	Physical and Rural Directorates, NTA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of identified cycle networks progressed/delivered 2. No. of long-distance cycling and walking routes identified in the county and progress on/deliver of same 3. Progress on and delivery of West Clare Railway Greenway
CDP11.6 Rail Network	✓	✓	✓		✓	Physical and Rural Directorate, Iarnród Éireann, NTA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on opening/reinstatement of railway stations on the Western Railway Corridor 2. Monitor the area of land zoned for railway uses 3. Monitor the progress made on the Identification of a resolution to periodic flooding of the Ennis – Limerick rail line
CDP11.7 Shannon Rail Link	✓	✓	✓		✓	Physical Directorate, TII, NTA, Iarnród Éireann	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor progress made on and delivery of the N19 National Road upgrade to Shannon International Airport 2. Monitor progress made on the review of the existing feasibility study relating to the Shannon Rail Link



CDP11.8 Bus Transport	✓	✓	✓		✓	Physical Directorate, TII, NTA, Bus Service Providers, Ennis MD	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of new bus routes in the county 2. No. of projects for new/upgraded bus facilities and associated infrastructure planned/commenced/delivered in the county
CDP11.9 Transport Assets & Multi-Modal Travel Integration	✓	✓	✓		✓	Ennis 2040 Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates	Progress on the development of Ennis as a bus and rail connecting hub
CDP11.10 EV & CNG Infrastructure & Smart Mobility			✓			Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of new Electric Vehicle charging facilities in the county 2. No. of planning applications incorporating EV charging facilities 3. Progress on the development of the Future Mobility Campus in Shannon
CDP11.12 Motorway Service & Rest Areas	✓					Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates NTA	Progress on and delivery of a Type 1 service area at the identified location on the M18
CDP11.19 Shannon International Airport		✓				Economic Task Force Shannon International Airport Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates Department of Transport, Adjoining Local Authorities, Airport Authorities, TII, the NTA	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on and completion of an Airport Strategy for the Southern Region 2. Progress on the further development of the International Aviation Services Centre 3. Progress on and completion of the upgrade to the Shannon Flood Relief Embankments 4. No. of planning applications granted/refused in Red Safety Zones and Public Safety Zones
CDP11.21 Water-Bourne Transport	✓				✓	Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of existing and new ferry routes/services in the county 2. Progress on and establishment of a ferry or water taxi service between North Clare and Galway City 3. Progress on and completion of the Doolin Pier Masterplan



CDP11.22 Ports & Harbours	✓		✓		✓	Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Directorates Shannon Foynes Port Company	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of marine related projects progressed at Cahiracon, Kilrush and Moneypoint planned/commenced/completed 2. Preparation and completion of a Regional Ports and Harbour Strategy for the Southern Region
CDP11.23 Shannon Foynes Port	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Co-ordination with relevant stakeholders SIFP steering group.	Progress on and delivery of infrastructure projects identified in the Shannon Foynes Port Company Infrastructure Development Programme
CDP11.26 Water Framework Directive & River Basin Management			✓	✓		Irish Water Clare County Council Inland Fisheries OPW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on and delivery of actions identified in the River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 2. No. of water bodies achieving improved water quality status/Poor water quality in the county 3. No. of Priority Areas, Blue Dot catchments retaining High Water Quality/achieving High water quality in the county
CDP11.27 Water Resources		✓				Irish Water Clare County Council Inland Fisheries OPW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on and completion of Drinking Water Protection Plans 2. Ongoing via development management process - protection of groundwater sources, rivers, and their habitats etc
CDP11.28 Strategic Water Supply Projects	✓	✓				Irish Water Clare County Council Inland Fisheries OPW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of IW water supply projects planned/commenced/completed in the county 2. No. of interactions by Clare County Council relating to IW proposals to abstract water from Lough Derg
CDP11.30 Water Supply	✓					Irish Water Water Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on and completion of IW Investment Plans 2. Cubic metres (m³) of water leakage reductions in the county's water supply 3. No. of planning applications which include rainwater harvesting facilities/water conservation measures



CDP11.32 Wastewater Treatment & Disposal	✓					Irish Water Water Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress on and completion of IW Investment Plans 2. Ongoing via the development management process – development of treatment systems and protection of the environment
CDP11.34 Rural Wastewater Treatment Programmes	✓					Irish Water Water Services	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of new/upgrades to public wastewater system in the county planned/commenced/delivered in rural areas 2. No. of serviced sites delivered in the county
CDP11.37 Litter Management	✓					Clare County Council Environment Section	Progress on and delivery of Actions identified in the Clare County Litter Management Plan
CDP11.41 Air Quality	✓					Clare County Council Environment Section	Monitor improvements or a decline in air quality in the county.
CDP11.44 Energy Security	✓			✓		EirGrid ESB Clare County Council	Monitor progress made towards the sustainable redevelopment of Moneypoint Power Station:
CDP11.47 Renewable Energy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Co-ordination with relevant stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of planning applications granted/refused for renewable energy developments including wind energy developments 2. Monitor progress made on the completion of a new Wind Energy Strategy for County Clare 3. Monitor initiatives promoting/marketing the county as a leader in renewable energy provision planned/commenced/completed
CDP11.48 Renewable Energy Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Co-ordination with relevant stakeholders	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of planning applications granted/refused for renewable energy developments (on-shore and off-shore) 2. Monitor progress made on achieving key targets set out in the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2023-2030



CDP11.53 Digital Strategy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Co-ordination with relevant stakeholders Economic and Rural Directorate	Monitor progress on and delivery of Actions set out in the Clare Digital Strategy 2023
CDP11.55 Telecommunications Infrastructure	✓		✓	✓	✓	Co-ordination with relevant stakeholders Development Management	No of planning applications granted/refused for digital and mobile infrastructure

Chapter 12. Shannon Estuary

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP12.1 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary		✓	✓	✓		Clare County Council/SIFP Steering Group	Monitor the progress made on and delivery of objectives of the SIFP
CDP12.9 Promoting Tourism, Recreation & Leisure around the Shannon Estuary	✓	✓			✓	Clare Tourism Strategy/Clare County Council Failte Ireland	No. of new tourism, recreation, and leisure projects/businesses around the Shannon Estuary
CDP12.10 Cruise Ship Industry		✓				Clare County Council/ Shannon Foynes Port Company/ SIFP steering group	Monitor the no. of cruise ships using the Shannon Estuary
CDP12.14 Maritime Training Centre	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Economic Directorate	Monitor the delivery of the Maritime Training Centre



Chapter 13. Marine & Coastal Zone Management

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP13.4 Integrated Coastal Zone Management	✓	✓	✓			SRA, Governments Marine Spatial Planning Division	Progress towards and preparation of an integrated Coastal Zone Management Plan for the county
CDP13.8 Shellfish Waters Directive		✓				Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, EPA	Achievement of water quality standards set out in the Shellfish Waters Directive in the five designated Shellfish Waters in the county
CDP13.11 Coastal Erosion & Flooding	✓	✓				Development Management, Department of Agriculture Food and the Marine, OPW	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of coastal erosion flood relief schemes planned/commenced/completed No. of planning applications granted/refused within Coastal areas at risk
CDP13.14 EU Bathing Water Directive	✓	✓				An Taisce, Environment Department	No. of retained and new Green Coast Awards, Clean Coasts and Blue Flags in the County



Chapter 14. Landscape

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP14.1 Landscape Character Assessment	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	Completion of review and update of County Clare Landscape Strategy (dependent on national Landscape Character Assessment)

Chapter 15. Biodiversity, Natural Heritage & Green Infrastructure

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP15.1 Biodiversity	✓	✓			✓	Economic Directorate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor progress made on the review of the Clare County Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and completion of same. 2. No. of Biodiversity Week events held annually 3. No. of Awards received for biodiversity projects/initiatives
CDP15.3 European Sites	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of planning applications accompanied by NIAR 2. All new SAC and SPA designated sites mapped and made available
CDP15.10 Environmental Impact Assessment	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	No of planning applications accompanied by EIAR
CDP15.17 Freshwater Pearl Mussels	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	Monitor improvements made in the conservation status of the Cloon Freshwater Pearl Mussel catchment
CDP15.20 Natural Resources & Climate Change	✓	✓	✓			Economic, Social, Rural and Physical Directorates	Monitor progress made on preparing a strategy to implement an active native tree planting programme in the county
CDP15.23 The Burren National Park	✓	✓				National Parks and Wild Life Services and the Economic Directorate	Progress on and completion of the Corofin Streetscape Enhancement Strategy
CDP15.25 Burren & Cliffs of Moher Geopark	✓	✓				Rural Directorate	Monitor progress made on the delivery of the Cliff of Moher Strategy 2040
CDP15.26 World Heritage Status	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	Monitor progress made on the applications for inclusion on the World Heritage-Tentative List for identified sites in County Clare



CDP15.28 Dark Sky Reserve Designations	✓	✓				Rural and Physical Directorates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on and identification of a potential Dark Sky Reserve in the county No. of public lightings systems replaced in the county
CDP15.29 Alien & Invasive Species	✓	✓				Economic, Social, Rural and Physical Directorates	No. of Invasive Species Surveys carried out in the county
CDP15.30 Green Infrastructure & Climate Change	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Economic, Social, Rural and Physical Directorates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Progress on and delivery of green infrastructure proposals identified in the Green Infrastructure Plan for Shannon Progress on and completion of a green infrastructure plan for Ennis and Kilrush during the lifetime of this Plan

Chapter 16. Architectural, Archaeological & Cultural Heritage

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP16.1 Architectural Heritage	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of new Protected Structures and ACAs identified in the county No. of planning applications granted/refused affecting Protected Structures and ACAs in the county
CDP16.2 Protected Structures	✓	✓				Economic Directorate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> No. of planning applications granted/refused affecting Protected Structures No. of Section 57 Declarations considered
CDP16.7 Maintenance & Improvement of Architectural Heritage	✓	✓				National Monuments Service	Progress on and completion of a Climate Change Vulnerability Risk Assessments of the Archaeological and Architectural Heritage and Cultural Assets of the county



CDP16.11 Archaeology & Infrastructure Schemes	✓	✓				Economic Development Directorate	No. of planning applications and Section 254 Licences that were accompanied by an Archaeological Impact Assessment Report
CDP16.14 Art, Heritage, Cultural and Creative Sectors	✓	✓			✓	Social Development Directorate	Progress on and delivery of actions identified in the Clare Arts Development Plan 2019-2023
CDP16.17 Oidhreacht Theanga/Linguistic Heritage		✓			✓	Economic, Physical, Social and Rural Development Directorates	1. Development of a language Plan for the Irish Language Network in Ennis 2. No. of new Irish language events in the county
CDP16.18 Folklore & Oral Cultural Heritage		✓			✓	Economic, Social and Rural Development Directorates	No. of new initiatives for the gathering, recording, preservation and promotion of folklore and oral cultural heritage

Chapter 17. Towns and Villages

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP17.1 Town & Village Centre Vibrancy	✓	✓		✓	✓	Economic, Rural, Social and Physical Directorates	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No. of public realm projects/initiatives completed 2. Completion of annual Ennis Town Centre Health Check 3. No of sites entered on/ removed from the Vacant Site Register 4. No of sites entered on/ removed from the Derelict Sites Register and no. of derelict sites improved
CDP17.2 Town & Village Improvement Strategies	✓	✓			✓	Economic and Rural Directorates and local communities	No of Town Centre First initiative and masterplans initiated and completed
CDP17.4 Town Teams	✓	✓			✓	Economic, Rural, Physical and Social Directorates	No. of projects/plans prepared/commenced/completed by the various Town Teams and supported by Clare County Council
CDP17.6 Opportunity Sites	✓	✓		✓		Economic, Rural, Physical and Social Directorates	No. of Opportunity Sites on which proposals are progressing (pre-planning, planning application stage, development etc)
CDP17.7 Town & Village Centre Vacancy	✓	✓		✓		Economic Directorate Housing Section	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No of Initiatives implemented to engage with property owners to address vacancy 2. No. of vacant properties owned by Clare County Council 3. No. of vacant properties owned by Clare County Council brought back into use 4. No. of targeted measures/initiatives implemented to address vacancy and deliver sustainable reuse/regeneration of same



CDP17.9 Lands Identified As Areas On Which the Vacant Site Levy can Apply	✓	✓	✓			Economic Directorate	No of sites entered on/removed from the Vacant Sites Register
CDP17.10 Derelict Sites	✓	✓	✓			Economic Directorate	No of sites entered on/ removed from the Derelict Sites Register and no. of derelict sites improved



Chapter 18. Design and Placemaking & Towns

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP18.1 Sustainable Place Framework	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Economic and Rural Development Directorates	Progress on and delivery of a Sustainable Place Framework
CDP18.3 Ten Minutes Towns	✓		✓		✓	Public, Physical and Economic Development Directorates, transport and service providers	No. of public and smart travel initiatives planned/commenced/delivered that assist compact growth in existing built-up areas of the county
CDP18.6 Design & Built Environments	✓	✓				Economic and Physical Directorate / private developers and designers.	Progress on and development of a Design Awards Scheme



Chapter 19. Land Use & Zoning

Objective	Strategic Development Plan Principles					Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation (Key Performance Indicator / Data Source)
	Quality of Life	Sustainability	Climate Action	Resilience	Inclusivity		
CDP19.1 Local Area Plans	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Planning / Ennis MD and Shannon MD	Preparation and delivery of local area plans for: (a) Shannon Town and Environs, and (b) Ennis and Environs LAP
CDP19.3 Compliance with Zoning	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Development Management	No. of Material Contraventions over the lifetime of the plan



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