



COMHAIRLE | CLARE
CONTAE AN CHLÁIR | COUNTY COUNCIL

Buiséad A Glacadh 2026

Adopted Annual Budget 2026



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The cover features a teal background with several overlapping, hand-drawn style circles in a golden-yellow color. A large circular inset in the center contains a photograph of a modern building with a glass facade and a flat roof, surrounded by greenery. The text "CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT" is overlaid on this central image in white, sans-serif font.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE REPORT

Introduction

I enclose the Adopted Budget for Clare County Council for the year ending 31st December 2026, together with a report outlining the main provisions contained therein.

Department Circular Fin 10/2025 sets out the prescribed period for the holding of the 2026 budget meeting in accordance with Section 103 of the Local Government Act 2001 (as amended), the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) Regulations 2014 and the Local Government (Financial and Audit Procedures) (Amendment) Regulations, as prescribed by the Minister. This period is from 3rd November 2025 to 28th November 2025. The statutory meeting for Clare County Council to consider the draft budget was fixed for Wednesday, 26th November 2025 at 3pm. At this budget meeting, the Members were asked to make the following decisions:

- Adopt the Budget with or without their balanced amendment
- Determine the Annual Rate on Valuation for 2026
- Determine the proportion of rates abatement applicable on vacant commercial properties under Section 9 of the Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019.
- Determine the waiver applicable on commercial properties under Section 15 of the Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019 following consideration and recommendation from the Economic SPC.
- Approve, under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001, the Clare County Council Small and Medium Enterprise Scheme (SME), Hospitality Business Grant Scheme, Leisure and Arts Facilities Grant Subventions and the Long-Term Vacant Property Occupation Incentive Scheme.

Since taking up the role of Chief Executive in May of this year, I have engaged extensively with senior staff, Elected Members and key stakeholders to ensure a coordinated and ambitious focus on the Council's objectives.

Our foremost priorities for 2026 are clear - to accelerate all forms of housing delivery and to increase investment in critical infrastructure across the county. These ambitions are underpinned by a significant revision to the Council's organisational structure designed to maximise our capacity to deliver for the people of Clare.

From October 2025, Clare County Council will operate with 6 directorates, each reflecting and supporting our strategic priorities. The newly established Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision and Land Activation Directorate will lead a step-change in housing activation, supported by a dedicated Housing Activation Senior Executive Officer. Our foremost priority is the activation of housing across all tenures - social, affordable and private. We are committed to accelerating delivery, supporting vibrant communities and ensuring that every resident has access to a secure and suitable home. Housing activation is not only a response to local demand, but a vital enabler of town regeneration, rural re-population and economic development. We will establish a Clare Housing Industry Forum, strengthen our vacant homes and derelict sites teams and create a cross-directorate working group to ensure a joined-up approach to housing and infrastructure.

Investment in county-wide infrastructure is equally critical. In particular, we will continue to prioritise the maintenance and improvement of our local and rural road network recognising its vital role in supporting economic activity, community connectivity and quality of life throughout Clare. Budget 2026 reflects our determination to provide additional local funding, secure and maximise national funding for these essential works, even as we navigate ongoing financial pressures and a challenging funding environment. The Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services Directorate will prepare a strategic plan for investment in our national secondary and regional roads, renew engagement on the Limerick Northern Distributor Road and explore innovative solutions to wastewater services challenges.

At the same time, we remain steadfast in our commitment to maintaining high-quality local services. Our libraries, recreation and amenity facilities and tourism sites are at the heart of community life and local identity. The Council will continue to maintain and improve these services, ensuring they are accessible, sustainable and responsive to the needs of all our citizens.

We have worked closely with the Corporate Policy Group, Members and stakeholders to ensure that the budget is balanced, prudent and aligned with statutory requirements, maintaining services and delivering on local ambitions.

The adopted budget of €204m represents targeted investment into the local economy. In presenting Draft Budget 2026 to the Corporate Policy Group and Members, a funding gap in expenditure over income in excess of €5.3m was identified. In addition to maintaining services, this includes €1m additional budget provision for road infrastructure, €0.5m in reassigned or additional resources in housing activation and additional budget provision to increase Housing Grants for the Elderly by €0.5m in 2026.

To present a balanced budget for presentation to Members, it required us to generate more income or reduce expenditure or a combination of both. Budget 2026, adopted by Members, is balanced with circa €1.8m reductions across expenditure lines and generating additional income of €3.5m. This need for investment in roads infrastructure and housing activation was considered at length by the Members with a strong resolve not to pass on any significant increases to the SME business community. This budget has been framed with an increase in commercial rates. This increase will deliver additional income of circa €2m commercial rates from the energy and utilities sector with the remaining €1.5m coming from 4,050 commercial rates customers. This will impact one-third of ratepayers or 1,400 by, on average, €1.28 per week and over half of all customers will see, on average, €3 or less per week. The following Table 1 provides some worked examples of this impact across some of our commercial rates customers:

Table 1: Impact of commercial rates increase

Example 1 –Butcher	Draft Budget 2026
Rate Warrant 2025	€1,226
Proposed Rate Warrant 2026	€1,324
Support Scheme	-€66
Net Cost	€1,258
Increase	€32

Example 2 –Bar/Shop	Draft Budget 2026
Rate Warrant 2025	€3,695
Proposed Rate Warrant 2026	€3,990
Support Scheme	-€199
Net Cost	€3,791
Increase	€96

Example 3 – Hairdresser/ Beauty Salon	Draft Budget 2026
Rate Warrant 2025	€7,505
Proposed Rate Warrant 2026	€8,105
Support Scheme	-€405
Net Cost	€7,700
Increase	€195

Example 4 – Large Bar/Restaurant	Draft Budget 2026
Rate Warrant 2025	€10,659
Proposed Rate Warrant 2026	€11,512
Support Scheme	-€528
Net Cost	€10,984
Increase	€325

Example 5 – Garage / Forecourt & Large Retail Offering	Draft Budget 2026
Rate Warrant 2025	€33,986
Proposed Rate Warrant 2026	€36,705
Support Scheme	€0
Net Cost	€2,719
Increase	€2,719

Table 2 below depicts Revenue Expenditure by Division for 2025 and 2026. This increase in expenditure is matched by increased income. The level of expenditure shown below, at €204m, will be financed from the Local Property Tax allocation, commercial rates income, grants & subsidies and goods & services. Further details on these categories are available in the accompanying tables to this report.

Table 2: Expenditure by Division

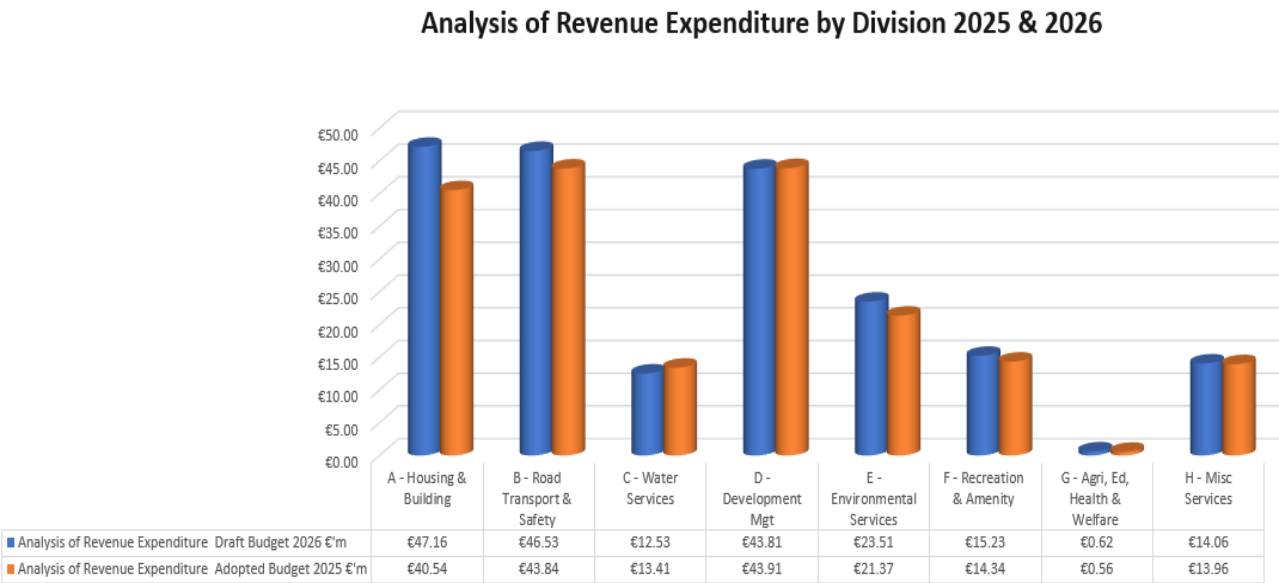
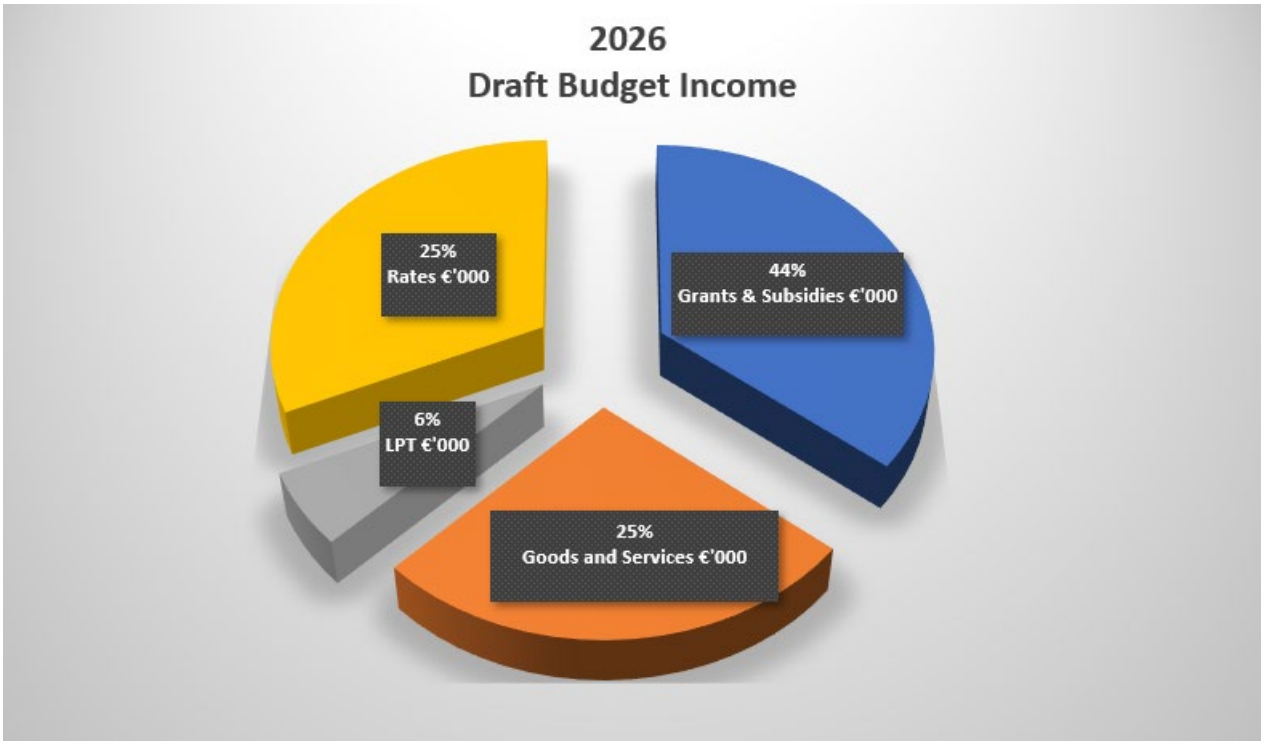


Table 3 below shows the income sources which fund this expenditure.

Table 3: Income sources



Goods and Services Income

Goods and Services income represents a vital funding stream for this Council, supporting the delivery of essential services and infrastructure. This income of €52m as set out in Table D to this report is generated from a range of sources including rents, planning fees, recycling charges, fire service charges, parking fees & fines and income from tourism sites. Budget 2026 highlights increased income from Goods and Services following a comprehensive review this year, which helps to balance the budget and maintain high-quality local services for residents. These income adjustments are effective from 1st January 2026.

Grants and Subsidies Income

Grants and Subsidies income is a crucial component of Local Authority funding in Ireland, enabling Councils to deliver a wide range of services and infrastructure projects. This income is sourced from various Government departments and multi-cabinet initiatives supporting areas such as roads, housing and community development. However, the Local Government funding model is increasingly part-funded meaning Local Authorities must often supplement grants with their own income to cover both the development and ongoing operation of new services. This approach presents challenges and risks, as Government priorities and allocations can change, leaving Local Authorities to manage permanent funding commitments for established services. Grants and Subsidies income is €89m in Budget 2026 compared to €30m five years ago. While this investment in grants in County Clare is welcomed from National Government, it does come with a cost base increase in the delivery of these services.

Local Property Tax (LPT)

The 2026 allocation from Local Property Tax funding to Clare County Council has been confirmed as €12.49m. This represents a €0.8m increase over the 2025 allocation. The decision of Members at the September 2024 statutory meeting to retain the LPT at the same level as the last 5 years, for the next 5 years, the term of the Council, is reflected in this allocation.

This is a positive decision by Members in securing the funding and bringing some financial certainty to this process. Details of the 2026 allocation from the Local Property Tax is set out in Table 4.

Table 4: Local Property Tax Allocation

Clare County Council - 2026 LPT Allocation	2026	2025
	€m	€m
Total LPT Projected at Unvaried LPT Rate (100%)	10.76	9.96
Amount (to)/ from National Equalisation Fund	0.12	0.22
Total LPT Funding	10.88	10.18
LPT Retained Locally for Revenue Budget	10.88	10.18
Adjustment to LPT Rate +15%	1.61	1.49
Total LPT Retained	12.49	11.67
Net Increase	0.82	0.03

Commercial Rates

Commercial rates in Budget 2026 of €49.9m accounts for 25% of the total budgeted expenditure. This is a vital source of income underpinning the delivery of essential public services and community development. These rates, levied on business properties, fund a wide range of activities including road maintenance, public lighting, fire and emergency services, housing supports and economic development initiatives. The income also contributes to cultural, recreational and environmental projects that enhance quality of life for residents and businesses. By providing a stable revenue stream, commercial rates enable this Council to plan and invest in infrastructure and services that sustain local economies and foster vibrant communities.

The Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act (LGRMA) 2019 was enacted in 2019, with certain provisions later enacted in late 2023 under the Archaeological, Heritage and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023. This legislation modernised commercial rates billing procedures involving the transition from the previous bi-annual “moieties” system to a single annual charge due on the first day of January each year. The legislation has many elements but the following 3 are relevant for 2026:

- (1)** Section 9 allows Local Authorities to adopt schemes for the abatement of commercial rates on vacant properties. Vacancy abatement under the Act (Section 9) is a reserved function to be approved at the Local Authority statutory budget meeting following a public consultation process. Clare County Council Members have applied a tiered scheme for relief on vacant properties for some years now. This scheme is linked to the value of the annual commercial rates of the property. It is proposed to continue this tiered approach to rating these premises in Budget 2026 as set out in the attached “Report on Abatement of Rates in respect of Vacant Properties”.
- (2)** Section 12 provides for the charging of interest on overdue rates. From 1st January 2025, unpaid rates will begin to accrue interest from the first day of January in the year following the local financial year (1st January 2026) to which they relate, continuing until full payment is received. The prescribed daily rate of interest is 0.0219%, equivalent to an annual rate of 8%.
- (3)** Section 15 provides for Local Authorities to make schemes to support local and national policy objectives by providing a waiver against commercial rates. The regulation in this case provides a role for the Economic SPC. The SPC met on a number of occasions to deliberate on this as there can only be one waiver scheme in a county in any one year. It is proposed to reduce commercial rates over a three-year period on a county-wide basis for certain commercially rates premises, eg. new build hotels, new build nursing homes, etc. The scheme is set out in detail in the attached “Report on the Waiver Scheme for Commercial Rates” to this report.

The 2026 budget continues to provide for the loss of commercial rates from the revision and subsequent revaluation of the ESB Moneypoint site to a loss of €5.47m. Budget 2026 provides Government grant support for this loss of income of €4m on a year-to-year basis. This is a risk that this Council is managing on an annual basis with the Local Government Finance Section of our parent department.

In 2025, there were a number of revaluations completed on global entities, namely communication networks. These final certs were issued in recent weeks with an increased income of €100k to this Council in 2026. Outside of this global valuation income buoyancy, there is no real additional commercial rates income from new properties in Budget 2026. This is a challenge for the sector as the timeline from sending up new businesses to be valued for commercial rates is subject to long, delayed timelines from Tailte Éireann and the corresponding loss of income to this Councils' budget process.

The proposed Annual Rate on Valuation (ARV) for 2026 is 0.2581. This represents an increase of, on average, less than €1.28 per week for one-third of businesses, and €3 per week for half of the businesses in the county. This, taken together with the continuance of the Small and Medium Enterprise Support Grant, can reduce this impact further for over 87% of customers. This increase is to maintain and increase services, and secure increased investment in roads, housing activation and housing grants.

Commercial Rates Grant Schemes

Budget 2026 provides for the continuation of a number of commercial rates customer grant schemes for adoption by Members at the statutory budget meeting under Section 66 of the Local Government Act 2001 and are outlined in more detail on the Council's website. Information is also available to any customer from their Account Manager. These are:

- (1) Long Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme:** This scheme encourages the re-occupation of vacant premises. The grant scheme is a step-in arrangement in the first 3 years of business.
- (2) Hospitality Grant Scheme:** Budget 2026 provides for a continuation of this scheme which will provide for a 5% credit against commercial rates paid by direct debit and/or fully paid by 31st August 2026 capped at €5,000 for hospitality providers who are operating in the tourism support business.
- (3) The Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Scheme:** This scheme continues for 2026. 87% or circa 9 out of every 10 businesses in the county can qualify for this scheme. Businesses in County Clare with a commercial rates liability of up to €10,000 can avail of a credit of 5% against the subsequent years' rates liability, where the customer discharges their rates invoice by direct debit and/or fully paid by 31st August 2026.

Uisce Éireann and Service Delivery

In line with the Water Services Bill 2022, from 2023 Irish Water changed to Uisce Éireann (UÉ) and began the transition to assume full responsibility for the delivery of water services in Ireland and move away from a Local Authority-led service delivery. This Master Co-Operation Agreement provides UÉ with full accountability for water services functions and the necessary management and direction of water services staff who choose to remain employees of this Council.

The new Agreement signed by this Council captures the arrangements for payment by UÉ for direct water services related costs, with our parent department agreeing to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the County and City Management Association (CCMA) to meet these stranded costs that will fall to each Local Authority. This agreement is in place for 2024 and 2025 with further agreement to be reached for future years. Budget 2026 has been prepared on this basis.

However, this Council and all Local Authorities in Ireland face significant exposure to the Central Management Charge (CMC) for water services which represents costs arising from the transition of water service delivery to UÉ. While these charges continue to accrue due to staffing and operational commitments during the transition period, the reimbursement mechanism from Central Government remains capped at 2022 payment levels. This static recoupment arrangement does not reflect the reality of rising expenditure and inflationary pressures in subsequent years, leaving Councils to absorb additional costs without proportionate compensation. This additional cost burden on Local Authorities is despite assurances that no Local Authority would be impacted by the transition of services to UÉ.

The gap between actual costs and capped reimbursement creates financial strain, impacting Local Authorities' ability to manage budgets effectively and maintain service delivery across other critical areas. The total Central Management cost to Uisce Éireann-managed services in Budget 2026 is €3.7m with full cost recovery expected from DHLGH.

General Municipal Allocation (GMA)

The General Municipal Allocation (GMA) is a discretionary funding mechanism provided under the Local Government Reform Act 2014 for Municipal Districts within County Councils. It forms part of the annual budgetary process and is designed to give Elected Members a degree of control over local spending priorities, enabling them to allocate resources to projects that reflect community needs. Typical uses include local road and footpath improvements, community grants, recreational amenities, Tidy Towns initiatives and other community supports. Allocation levels are determined by the Chief Executive based on overall Council resources, district size and representation, with recent budgets in Clare County Council maintaining a total GMA of €1.372m distributed across 4 districts – Ennis (€343k), Shannon (€343k), Killaloe (€245k) and West Clare (€441k). Decisions on how funds are spent within each district are a reserved function of the Municipal District Members, ensuring local accountability and flexibility in addressing priorities.

Payroll and Pensions

Salaries and Wages

This budget provides for Salaries and Wages on the revenue budget of circa €58.15m which includes the impact of National Pay Agreements between Government and Unions, resulting in increased payroll costs for Budget 2026. These centrally negotiated agreements affect pay rates for all public sector workers including Local Government employees. Confirmation has been received that €13.74m of additional cumulative costs of pay agreements (2015-2024), associated with the various agreed National Pay Agreements, will be met centrally and recouped to Clare County Council by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Activity on the delivery of capital projects and on the delivery of increased Central Government grant initiatives continues to increase. The costs associated with planning, designing and delivery, and administration of these projects and grant schemes are mainly borne by the revenue budget. In addition to the revenue budget cost increase, there continues to be a level of specific posts within the Council that have a payroll recoupment grant as part of the Government initiative. This brings considerable risk where this Council appoints permanent posts in order to attract and retain candidates whilst the funding of the post is temporary in nature and at the behest of a Government department whether it continues or not. This Council is carrying a €2.5m risk in relation to recoupable posts. In order to present a balanced budget, a reduction in Salaries and Wages where vacant posts occur throughout the year and the timing of their filling, has been provided for.

Fire Service

The implementation of the Workplace Relations Commission's proposals for Retained Firefighters has been ongoing in 2024 and 2025 with an initial allocation of €1.15m to this Council in 2024. €1.8m has been allocated for 2025 with €2.4m allocated for 2026. Budget 2026 has been prepared to reflect this allocation.

Pensions and Gratuities

Increased costs continue to emerge in Pensions and Gratuities that are not met by Central Government but as part of the revenue budget process. The cost is provided for in the revenue budget and is met in part by superannuation income. This provision provides for pension payments for circa 670 retired employees. The cost of funding pensions in the Local Authority sector is different to public services where the pensions are funded as part of a central or parent department budget. This increasing financial demand impacts on the delivery of local services and has been raised by the Council and City Management Association (CCMA) with our parent department.

FINANCE, INVESTMENT AND ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE

Investment & Enterprise

The Investment and Enterprise function within Clare County Council plays a pivotal role in fostering entrepreneurship and supporting and attracting strategic investment to the county. As part of the Finance, Investment & Enterprise Directorate, the department is committed to strengthening engagement with local businesses, identifying targeted investment opportunities and serving as a key liaison for both existing Clare-based enterprises and potential investors.

In the context of the 2026 revenue budget, the Council continues to support initiatives that enhance the county's economic resilience and competitiveness. This includes funding for enterprise infrastructure, business support schemes and collaborative projects aimed at job creation and innovation. The budget reflects a strategic alignment with national and regional development priorities, ensuring that Clare remains an attractive location for sustainable investment and enterprise growth.

The recent realignment of the Clare Digi-Hub networks under the Finance, Investment and Enterprise Directorate marks a significant step forward in fostering greater collaboration within the county's enterprise ecosystem. This strategic move provides the Local Enterprise Office and DigiClare with enhanced opportunities to leverage each other's resources, expertise and networks. By working more closely together, both entities are now better positioned to deliver on shared objectives - attracting new investment, supporting local entrepreneurs and driving enterprise growth throughout County Clare. This alignment is expected to result in more coordinated initiatives, improved support for start-ups and established businesses alike, and a stronger, more resilient local economy.

In 2026 the Local Enterprise Office, supported by Enterprise Ireland, will be focused on driving digital transformation, supporting green and sustainable business practices and helping local enterprises scale up and export. Exploring the potential for business support and innovation through the existing DigiClare hub network will seek to further support and promote Clare as a quality business location in which to develop, re-locate or expand your business. The development of a new Mid-West Regional Enterprise Plan with neighbouring counties Limerick and Tipperary, together with a new 2-year Local Enterprise Development Plan for County Clare in 2026, will provide

complementary benefits that can significantly enhance enterprise development, job creation and innovation across County Clare and the wider mid-west.

HOUSING DELIVERY, INFRASTRUCTURE PROVISION AND LAND ACTIVATION DIRECTORATE

Housing Delivery and Land Activation

Clare County Council's strategic priorities include accelerating all forms of housing delivery and as such, the organisational structure within Clare County Council has been revised to support these ambitions. The changes include the newly established Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision and Land Activation Directorate to include a dedicated Housing Activation Unit. This Council highlights the importance of increased housing activation as an "enabler" to town regeneration, addressing rural depopulation and economic development.

Clare County Council continues to work on delivery of a very ambitious programme for housing under "Housing for All" and its successor plan "Delivering Homes, Building Communities 2025-2030". This programme will see Clare County Council deliver a total of 833 new social homes by 2026. Progress to date has been positive with this Council's delivery having exceeded targets in 2022, 2023 and 2024, amounting to 563 new homes. In 2024 alone, 156 new homes were provided through a combination of 33 direct build Local Authority units, as well as 116 new builds through AHBs, 4 turnkey solutions and 3 Buy and Renew properties. Currently, the indication is that the 2025 annual target of 164 new homes will also be exceeded. While the scale of delivery over the next few years is not without its challenges, the Council will endeavor to continue to meet and exceed targets where possible. This will, of course, necessitate the continued commitment and support of the Members as well as the ongoing close collaboration with the Approved Housing Body sector which is tasked with delivery of up to 40% of the overall target.

Increasing affordability is one of the cornerstones of "Housing for All". This Council has gained access to the Affordable Housing Fund and to date has received approval in relation to 3 schemes of which homes were sold in Shannon and Ennis in 2024 and 2025. In addition, this Council considers the delivery of affordable housing under Part V on a case-by-case basis and continues to engage with relevant stakeholders including developers, the Department of Housing, etc. We continue to run expressions of interest campaigns seeking proposals on the delivery of affordable homes and land acquisition. Under the Ready to Build Scheme, it is this Council's intent to make serviced sites available in our towns and villages at a discount of the market value to potential individual purchasers (self-builders). In this regard, good progress is being made with the progression of schemes in both Lisdoonvarna and Feakle.

The Enhanced Defective Concrete Block (DCB) Grant Scheme went live in mid-July 2023, with the required Act and Regulation in place. The scheme is open and the Council's DCB team have received over 169 applications to date through the online application portal. This Council, in its' administration role, has issued 61 no. remediation grant options amounting to approximately €19.5m to date. Clare County Council awaits the launch of the Local Authority Defective Concrete Block Scheme, which will then allow Local Authority housing stock affected by deleterious materials to be remediated. The Council has a DCB Facilitator in place to assist homeowners with the application process.

As the Council continues to increase its housing stock, the importance of maintaining these assets is even more critical. However, the trend in recent years has been a steadily declining contribution from national funding models towards management and maintenance of vacant stock. This, coupled

with the urgency to turn around vacant units for re-letting to meet housing demand, continues to place a significant financial burden locally, and efforts to address the funding gap will continue in 2026.

Capital Infrastructure Delivery (Project Management Office/General Design Office)

The Capital Infrastructure Delivery Team within Clare County Council plays a vital role in transforming strategic plans into deliverable projects. This team is responsible for overseeing the planning, design, procurement and construction of infrastructure projects such as road projects, flood alleviation schemes, greenway projects and strategic infrastructure. Good governance and administration across these projects is essential.

The Capital Infrastructure Delivery Team has a substantial programme of capital investment underway and planned for 2026. A significant proportion of this funding is recoverable from the relevant parent departments. Key infrastructure projects advancing during the year will include the following:

- concluding of the Killaloe by-pass and Shannon Bridge crossing and its final account
- concluding of the Ennis Public Realm Projects and its final account
- delivery to next stage of the N69/N85 Inner Relief Road at Ennistymon (Blake's Corner) following judicial review
- development of the West Clare Railway Greenway sections
- detailed design of Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme following permission received in 2025
- Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme
- N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

The primary focus for 2026 is to maintain momentum across these projects while proactively managing any delays or challenges that may arise.

Land Activation, Derelict Sites and Property Management

The Land Acquisition, Derelict Sites and Property Management Unit is increasing its ambition of taking strong action on derelict sites and significant progress has been made in this area in recent years. Compulsory acquisitions processes are underway or completed on over 30 properties, some of which will be refurbished for social housing, some will be sold on the open market and others may be used for the business of the Council. Budget 2026 provides for the strengthening of the team to implement this key pillar of Government policy. Funding from the Derelict Sites Levy (which is 7% of the value of the property per annum) is provided for in the budget also, and the sum being billed is increasing annually. The budget also provides for the continuation of the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant which provides a significant boost to house owners all over County Clare.

TRANSPORTATION, CLIMATE ACTION, RECREATION, ENVIRONMENTAL AND EMERGENCY SERVICES DIRECTORATE

The Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services Directorate encompasses the following sections: Roads and Transportation, Fire and Emergency Management, Water Services, Environment and Climate Action and the West Clare Municipal District.

This Directorate will continue to work throughout the coming year with the various Government departments (Department of Transport, Department of Housing Local Government and Heritage, Office of Public Works (OPW), Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), National Transport Authority

(NTA), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Uisce Éireann (UÉ) along with other relevant stakeholders in achieving our objectives. In particular, the Directorate will prepare a strategic plan for investment in our roads infrastructure and examine alternatives to water services deficiencies.

The priorities for the Directorate for Budget 2026 are:

- continue to implement the recommendations of the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) Agreement for Fire and Emergency Services
- increased investment in the restoration and maintenance of local and regional roads maintenance
- provide funding for resourcing and ongoing maintenance of stormwater infrastructure
- provide for Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP)
- support the implementation of the Climate Action Plan (CAP) objectives
- implement a balanced approach to funding investment in the Schedule of Municipal District Works
- protection of the environment.

Transportation and Mobility

A key focus of the Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services Directorate is to maintain and improve the condition of the road infrastructure across the county in line with funding requirements and allocations through department grants and own resources.

The Transportation and Mobility Section work closely with the Municipal District Engineers in the delivery of the Schedule of Municipal District Works. The Road Design Office delivers projects across the county and reports to the Senior Engineer in Transportation and Mobility. The Road Design Office also supports the delivery of sustainable and active travel projects as funded through the NTA.

A major priority for 2026 will be the continued delivery and funding of the Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP).

Fire and Emergency

Clare County Fire and Rescue Service continues to implement the recommendations of the 2023 Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) agreement in the provision of additional fire service personnel. Since the 2023 agreement, Retained Firefighter staff numbers have increased from 78 to 90. Associated with this has been an increase in training, equipment and personal protective equipment costs to ensure compliance with required standards. A recoupment from the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management has been agreed for the additional budget required for 2026 (similar to 2025). This cost has already been referenced earlier in the report and there is potential that the levels of reimbursement will not be sufficient.

Water Services

Uisce Éireann is the authority responsible for municipal water services since the effective date which for Clare was 20th September 2023. Council staff are now under the control and direction of Uisce Éireann albeit these staff remain employees of the Council unless the individual decides to transition to Uisce Éireann. Priority for 2026 is to work with Uisce Éireann to ensure the continued delivery of water services under the master co-operation and support services agreements. This service will also face challenges as this transition is implemented in the final year of the agreement.

We are also aiming to progress the Broadford and Cooraclare Wastewater Schemes under Measure A8 of the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme, in conjunction with Uisce Éireann and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Environment

The focus of the Environment Section for 2026 is compliance with our statutory obligations in the relevant legislation areas, such as compliance with recommendations of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), audit and statutory obligations, commencement of projects to enhance the Closure, Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan (CRAMP) for historic landfills and the National Agriculture Inspection Programme.

Climate Action

The Clare County Council Local Authority Climate Action Plan (LACAP) 2024-2029 was adopted unanimously in February 2024. The LACAP contains 126 actions towards achieving the Council's climate objectives. Since adoption, the Climate Team has been liaising with other Directorates and countywide stakeholders in the implementation of key actions, the status of which are presented in annual progress reports. Separately, grant funding of €572k has been provided to community groups throughout 2024-2025 under the Community Climate Action Programme to enable them to take meaningful action at local level, building low-carbon, sustainable and climate-resilient communities. Phase 2 of this programme was launched in October 2025 where an additional €572k will be made available to community groups.

In respect of energy targets, the Local Authorities of Clare (lead authority), Limerick and Kerry have collaborated to establish the Midwest Energy Unit to secure matched capital funding from the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to carry out deep retrofits to de-carbonise Local Authority building stock to meet nationally binding targets by 2030. In-house energy activities continue to focus on maintaining accreditation to ISO50001 Energy Management System which has been certified since 2018. Monitoring energy usage across the organisation and in particular, the significant energy users, to ensure that energy efficiency measures are being implemented through analysis of quarterly energy data.

Recreation

There are a range of facilities included in this increasingly popular amenity offering including Active Ennis, John O'Sullivan Park (Lees Road), Active Ennis Leisure Complex, Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park, Active Ennis Glenina Pitch, Active Ennis Cloughleigh Astro turf and Active Ennis Coote Park as well as Active Kiltrush Sports Complex. In addition to the Council-owned Leisure Complex in Ennis, recreational and amenity services are provided by independently-owned centres in Lahinch, Kilkee Shannon and also Clarisford, Killaloe, which are grant aided by Clare County Council.

Clare County Council has been included in a new pilot programme under the 2018-2027 National Sports Policy, and it is anticipated that during 2026 we will deliver a countywide "Local Sports Plan" aimed at increasing participation through partnership with the Local Sports Partnership, clubs, organisations and communities amongst others.

Planning, Placemaking and Economic Development

County Clare provides a wide base for economic activity both in the mid-west and from a national perspective. Our economic drivers range from the enterprise zone in Shannon to the Burren and west coast, and from Lough Derg to the Shannon Estuary. Clare provides the economic corridor between Limerick and Galway cities, and our county town of Ennis is a focal point for our collective sense of community.

Planning and Economic Development

Housing activation is identified as a key deliverable for Clare County Council with new organisational structures established in Q4 2025. In conjunction with these changes, I have initiated a process to vary the Clare County Development Plan in adherence with the recently published Section 28 guidelines in respect of housing growth. The primary objective is to review the plan having regard to the objective to enable further housing delivery across the county. The Planning Department has begun the preparatory process, and workshops will be held towards the end of 2025 with a variation of the statutory plan expected to be adopted in mid-2026.

The potential to harness energy from off-shore wind remains an objective of Clare County Council with work continuing within the Directorate to promote the opportunities through national policies such as the Renewable Energies Directive, and to update elements of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary with our partners in Limerick and Kerry.

The remediation of the Roche site continues to progress as planned and the Council continues to work with the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) to promote the site as an ideal location for inward investment.

Ennis

Ennis is a designated key town for investment in the Southern Regional Spatial & Economic Strategy (RSES). It is intended that during 2026, the Ennis 2040 Economic & Spatial Strategy will be reviewed to ensure that the strategic focus remains clear for all stakeholders and aligned with the objectives for the town. The variation to the Clare County Development Plan will also provide an opportunity to align the review findings as part of the statutory process.

The Ennis Public Realm Enhancement Works have been delivered in the town centre. The local business community, residents and shoppers have been both passionate and understanding about their town and the emerging final product which has been delivered as part of a significant investment under the Urban Regeneration Development Fund (URDF). As the works reach a major milestone ahead of Christmas festivities in 2025, vehicles will once again be able to access all routes through the town centre with the exception of O'Connell Street which will remain closed to vehicular traffic until 16th February 2026. During this period, Clare County Council will invite the public, business communities and visitors to share their views on future access, traffic flow and possible pedestrianization options for O'Connell Street. A decision on the next stage will be finalised in early 2026.

In conjunction with the completion of the public realm works in Ennis, Clare County Council will be progressing a new Streetscape Improvement Scheme/Paint Scheme during 2026 for circa 400+ properties within the Architectural Conservation Area of Ennis. A maximum grant of €1,000 will be available to both commercial and selected residential properties.

The Ennis Transport Plan has been in development during 2025 with an emerging draft plan due to be presented for further consultation in early 2026 as part of the forthcoming variation to the Clare County Development Plan.

Works are continuing on the implementation of a Town Bus Service for Ennis with the National Transport Authority (NTA) recently confirming the appointment of the operational contractor. The detailed design of the bus stops is ongoing, and it is anticipated that construction work will begin on the terminal and large bus stops in January 2026. The commencement date of the Ennis Town Bus Service is anticipated towards the end of Q1 2026.

During 2025, the Council secured €7m in funding under the THRIVE Town Centre First Heritage Scheme to develop a vacant heritage property in Ennis. The Cloister Project is a major heritage-led redevelopment initiative aimed at transforming the historic Cloister building on Abbey Street into a vibrant arts and community hub.

The Town Centre First program aims to revitalise town centres across the county, making them more dynamic, appealing places to live, work and visit. The focus includes delivering Town Centre First Plans, supporting the formation of Town Teams and implementing collaborative capital projects that enhance community life and local infrastructure.

Rural Development and Community Development

The Rural Development Department delivers a wide-ranging work programme with local communities at its centre. A team of Rural & Community Development Officers assigned to our Municipal Districts provides direct support to community groups and organisations across the County.

Through strong collaboration with local agencies and stakeholders, the Department is actively advancing the goals of the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2030. This includes developing impactful community projects and initiatives, partnering with Municipal Districts and local groups and pursuing both local and national funding opportunities.

Local Area Grants Scheme

In 2026, Clare County Council will continue its strong commitment to community development through the Local Area Grants Scheme, providing essential funding to support local groups and organisations that strengthen the social fabric of our communities. Building on the additional funding introduced in 2025, support for the maintenance of burial grounds and community playgrounds will be sustained into 2026. The total budget allocated for the scheme in 2026 is €690k, ensuring continued investment in grassroots initiatives across the county.

Local Community Development Committee (LCDC)

The LCDC, a statutory committee of Clare County Council, continues to meet regularly with a clear purpose - to develop, coordinate and implement a unified approach to local and community development. Its core responsibility is to oversee the delivery of the community-focused actions within the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2030, working closely with lead agencies on the first of 3 two-year implementation plans.

In addition, the LCDC plays a key role in coordinating, managing and monitoring the rollout of various local and community development programmes. The LECP outlines a six-year vision for Clare, aiming to direct funding and investment where it is most needed and to foster collaboration among local agencies and organisations in delivering targeted actions.

Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)

The Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) continues to be embedded within Clare County Council's operating environment. Established during 2025, it is expected that the emerging structures will be operational during 2026.

Provided for under Part 3 of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Act 2024, the LCSP represents a more inclusive and strategic approach to community safety, replacing the former Joint Policing Committee (JPC).

Operating at Local Authority level, the LCSP will feature a broader and more diverse membership, including local residents and Councillors, community representatives (young people, older people, minority groups), business and education stakeholders and public service agencies such as the Health Service Executive (HSE), Tusla, An Garda Síochána and Clare County Council. A key function of the LCSP will be to develop and implement a Local Community Safety Plan for County Clare, expected in 2026. This plan will guide a coordinated, strategic response to community safety issues, ensuring that relevant service providers work in partnership with the local community to address challenges collectively.

Healthy Clare

The Healthy Clare Programme, delivered under the remit of the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), is one of several key initiatives actively supported by the Healthy Clare Working Group and the Healthy Clare Coordinator. Current efforts are focused on delivering outcomes under Healthy Ireland Round 4 Funding (2023–2025) with priority areas including:

- healthy weight – addressing issues related to overweight, obesity, and malnutrition
- mental health promotion – aiming to reduce suicide rates in Clare

These priorities are informed by data from the HSE's Health Intelligence Unit which highlights that Clare exceeds the national average in both areas, based on the Local Authority Health Heat Map Dataset.

Age Friendly

Clare County Council continues to prioritise age-friendly initiatives through the Age Friendly Programme, guided by a newly launched Age Friendly Strategy (2024–2030). This strategy outlines a shared vision for making Clare a great place to grow older, building on the achievements of the previous strategy.

The six-year implementation plan is supported by the Clare Older People's Council and the Clare Age Friendly Alliance, ensuring strong community representation and collaboration in delivering meaningful actions for older residents across the county.

Burial Grounds Unit

Burial grounds is an essential service and Clare County Council remains committed to providing an efficient and professional service. The Burial Grounds Unit undertook key capital projects in 2025, completing works at Killuran Burial Ground and Tulla Burial Ground. A heritage-led repair project was completed at Moynoe Burial Ground. Work continued on the proposed extension to the county burial ground at Drumcliffe with the submission of an application to An Coimisiún Pleanála in September.

The Burial Grounds Unit continues to develop our existing burial grounds and plinth installations are currently underway at Ennistymon and Lissycasey Burial Grounds. This work is being undertaken in collaboration with the General Design Office. A key piece of work is the formation of the Burial Grounds Policy which is currently being developed under the Rural Strategic Policy Committee. It is anticipated that the policy will be in place in 2026.

Local Authority Integration Team/Ukrainian Services

Clare County Council has established a Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) to coordinate support services for all members of the migrant community. This team plays a leading role in delivering integration programmes across the county.

The Community Integration Forum continues to provide vital support to both Ukrainian guests and refugees from other countries, as well as to the local communities who have worked tirelessly to assist them. The budget for these activities has been prepared based on full cost recovery from Central Government, including all expenses related to the operation of the Integration Team.

TOURISM, FESTIVALS, LIBRARIES AND CULTURAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE

Tourism

The tourism budget for 2026 is broadly in line with the 2025 budget and this provides for the management and maintenance of the Council-owned tourism sites as well as the broader promotion of County Clare as a sustainable tourism destination.

As provided for in budget 2026 and aligned to the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, during 2026 there will be additional focus on:

- festivals and events in County Clare
- strengthening the night-time economy particularly in Ennis and key towns across the county
- promotion of County Clare as a year-round sustainable destination on a local, national and international basis
- recognition of Clare (nationally and internationally) as a destination committed to responsible, sustainable tourism as validated by the EarthCheck Destination Standard awarded in 2025.

Under the remit of Clare County Council, the strategic tourism assets deliver day visitor attractions, medieval evening banquets, calendar of family events, culture, heritage and education initiatives, events venues, unique accommodation, hiking trails, food and retail to the economy of County Clare, and all form a solid base from which local towns and villages can thrive from footfall and overnight accommodation.

Budget 2026 provides for the operation, maintenance and management of the 7 Council-owned tourism sites in the county, namely the Cliffs of Moher Experience, Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, Vandeleur Walled Garden & Visitor Centre, Loop Head Lighthouse Experience and Attendant's Cottage, Knappogue Castle & Walled Garden, Cragganowen Castle & Crannog and Inis Cealtra Experience.

Clare Tourism Development (CTD DAC) is a special purpose vehicle company set up as a host employer to manage and promote Clare County Council's tourism attractions and associated services. CTD DAC operates under a Service Level Agreement with Clare County Council with the objective of delivering world-class experiences.

Overall, the collective financial performance of the tourism assets is positive. Operational plans are in place to achieve efficiency and improve the financial performance of all these tourism assets.

Twinning

During 2026, Clare County Council Twinning Committee will build on established relationships with our twinned cities/regions to strengthen economic links while continuing to harness mutually beneficial tourism opportunities.

Cultural Services – Libraries, Arts, Museum and Archives

Operation of the Library Service

The restructuring of the Directorate to accommodate Cultural Services occurred in the latter part of 2025. This will lead to several positive outcomes in 2026 including cultural enrichment, enhanced visitor experience, education and engagement, continued support for artists and authors, sustainable development and collaborative marketing.

The library service is one of the most consistently and widely used public services provided by the Local Authority in the county. It serves the local community through its broad network of 15 branch libraries (9 full-time and 6 part-time) and a dedicated Local Studies Department located in its flagship new library in Ennis. Throughout 2026, the Library Service will continue to provide innovative and responsive services to support reading and learning, provide access to spaces and buildings and respond to community needs through extensive community and cultural activities. Our libraries will continue to provide inclusive opportunities to access lifelong learning, health and wellbeing awareness and a range of cultural and educational experiences framed to be inclusive and open to all. With a strong collection of books and other learning resources at its core, it continues to chart a progressive approach to service delivery. In addition to an extensive book lending service, we will continue to develop our digital and on-line library services. This encompasses a broad range of e-books, e-magazines, e-newspapers, on-line courses and the completion of the upgrading of the library website – www.clarelibraries.ie

To support these initiatives, a comprehensive book fund is required to develop and strengthen collections, both physical and digital. In 2026, the library service will continue to implement the programmes of the National Public Library Strategy: “the Library is the Place”, namely Right to Read, Healthy Ireland at Your Library and Skill for Life. We will also continue with local actions as outlined in the Clare Library Development Plan (2023-2027). Programming will include lectures, writer and reader events, workshops, children's events including the Summer Reading Challenge, Children's Book Festival, book clubs and exhibitions. In addition, we will continue with events

focused on Cruinniú na nÓg, Seachtain na Gaeilge, Bealtaine, Heritage Week, Culture Night and History Week. We will continue to promote our Clare Local Studies Service, creating linkages with tourism through our genealogical offering and lecture series, and strive to showcase Clare's rich heritage through our holdings and acquisitions policy. We will continue to collaborate and work with our internal colleagues such as the Arts Officer, Climate Action and Biodiversity Officers, Age Friendly and Healthy Ireland Officers. We will continue our links with the Ennis Book Club Festival and Cuimhneamh an Chláir. We will also work through the external agencies assigned to deliver on national programmes such as the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA), Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY), Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) and Media Literacy Ireland.

Commemorations Programme

The Library Service has been integral to several commemorative events over the years. In 2025, the O'Dea clan gathering focused their activities on events in the new library in Ennis and the library was to the forefront in the celebration of the 250th birthday commemoration of Daniel O'Connell with documentary screenings, lectures and an exhibition. This commitment to promoting the cultural legacy of the county continues into 2026 through the History Week programme and funding support from Creative Ireland for a number of festivals.

Creative Ireland

The Creative Ireland Programme for Clare is managed by the Library Service through the activities of the Creative Ireland Co-ordinator (County Librarian) and the Creative Communities Engagement Officer. It is part of a national initiative operating in every county and runs from 2023-2027. It is focused on developing and supporting projects that deliver on the strategic priorities outlined in the Clare Culture and Creativity Strategy. These priorities aim to enrich communities, celebrate a sense of place and belonging, promote creative approaches to climate action and biodiversity and strengthen the overall impact of Creative Ireland within the county.

During 2025, notable progress was made in achieving these objectives through a combination of individual and collaborative efforts led by the Culture and Creativity Team. This team includes representatives from Libraries, Arts, Heritage, Biodiversity, Climate, Museum, Local Enterprise Office, Rural Development and Healthy Clare. The projects undertaken placed particular emphasis on the inclusion of seldom-heard voices, the celebration of Clare's distinctive heritage, the support of local creatives and the fostering of connections between communities through creative engagement.

Support was also provided through the Project Award Open Call, which offered funding to both individuals and community groups. The annual Cruinniú na nÓg celebration continued to grow, offering creative opportunities to children and young people across the county. This work will be further developed in 2026. The Creative Ireland Programme in Clare is supported by core funding of €188k approved by Creative Ireland.

Creative Communities – Shared Island Fund

The Creative Ireland Programme has also developed the Creative Communities - Shared Island initiative, which builds on the experience and expertise of Local Authorities in delivering strategic north-south and east-west collaborations. The initiative seeks to transform these ambitions into a cohesive network of creative partnerships across the island of Ireland.

Clare County Council successfully secured €250k for the delivery of the Birds of a Feather Project, which spans 2023-2025. This initiative brings together women from Ballinasloe, Belfast, Ennis and Inishbofin through a series of multi-annual gatherings centred on craft, enterprise and storytelling. Many of the participants have not previously engaged in all-island collaborative work. They represent a wide range of backgrounds including catholic, protestant, nationalist, loyalist, ethnic minorities, travellers, inner-city working-class communities, islanders and individuals with physical disabilities and mild dementia or from the deaf community. The project is designed to foster meaningful relationships, provide safe spaces for open dialogue and to build mutual understanding and respect. Ultimately, it aims to contribute to a shared vision for the future.

Cruinniú na nÓg

Cruinniú na nÓg is a national day of creativity for children and young people developed by Creative Ireland. It celebrates and encourages participation in creative activities and takes place annually in June. In 2026, Cruinniú na nÓg will be held on Saturday, 6th June.

Clare Museum

Clare Museum will continue to develop partnerships with other cultural institutions and the education sector. In addition to expanding its tourism potential, Clare Museum will continue its outreach programme to schools and community groups. The Museum will also continue to programme temporary exhibitions to compliment the permanent collection on display. The free admission to the Museum taps into the tourist offering for the town with 24,000 visitors through the doors in 2025 similar to numbers recorded for Powerscourt Distillery and Dungarvan Castle. With a small outlay on virtual reality equipment in 2026 aimed to bring to life the work of John Philip Holland – the inventor of the submarine - it is expected that this new addition to the offering will help advance visitor numbers. The maintenance of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) continues with the adoption of a number of strategic documents vital to the standard being awarded by the Heritage Council.

Archives

The Archives Service has been integrated into the Local Studies Service in the new library in Ennis and this is working in a very focused way. The digitization programme continues throughout 2026, collaborative initiatives will be advanced with Local Studies, and the section continues to work on acquiring collections and encouraging new deposits.

Operation of the Arts Service

Clare Arts Office manages and delivers on the implementation of the Arts Council Framework Programme for Clare, the provision of artist studios and a programme of grants and bursaries. It also leads the development of the arts locally to provide open and accessible opportunities for all, offering strategic supports to artists and fostering a continued appreciation and development of the arts. The new County Arts Development Plan lays the groundwork for arts development countywide in advance of the 2027 Arts Council Framework of Understanding. As ever, the Arts Office will continue to strive to include marginalised individuals and communities as far as possible through our activities. We will continue to support individual artists across all art forms and assist festivals to reach their full potential for the benefit of local communities and to generate economic and tourism activity in the county.

Per Cent for Art Scheme Co-ordination

Clare's Public Art Policy will be updated once informed by the forthcoming National Per Cent for Arts Policy Framework. It is anticipated that in 2026, co-ordination of commissioning under the Per Cent for Art Scheme will commence.

Arts Council Key Strategic Areas

In 2026, Clare Arts Office will deliver the implementation of the current Arts Council Framework Programme for the county. The framework agreement programme with the Arts Council falls under 4 key strategic areas:

- supporting artists and the visual arts
- young people, children and education
- arts and disability
- creative places

Supporting Artists and the Visual Arts

Súil Gallery in Ennis will programme 8 exhibitions accompanied by outreach and education events. Over 30 other exhibitions will take place in the Foyer of the County Museum in Ennis, Scariff Gallery at the Area Offices and Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee. We will continue to support exhibitions at the Ennistymon Courthouse Gallery and the Burren College of Art. We will continue to provide 16 artist studios in Tulla and Ennis and work towards the inclusion of new studios in The Cloister project in Ennis. The Arts Office will also manage a programme of grants and bursaries for artists of all disciplines. We will continue to work with our colleagues in Limerick City and County Arts Office and Tipperary Arts Office to provide professional development supports through Visual Artists Ireland.

We will aim to build on the 2,000 audience members who attend our 15 Riches of Clare concerts annually and we will work on creative traditional music projects with musicians and dancers. We will continue to support the Western Region Audio Visual Producers Fund (WRAP) to incentivize filming in the county and we will support emerging filmmakers by participating in Engine Shorts with Film in Limerick. Contributions to glór and the University Concert Hall, Limerick will continue in 2026.

Young People, Children and Education

Supported by the Arts Council, a programme of countywide arts events and projects will continue such as 15 residencies through our Artist in Schools Scheme. We will further develop the Transition Year Programme in Súil Gallery. 2026 will see the continued growth of Clare Youth Theatre from 72 to 96 members with an expansion to Shannon. 2026 will mark the 21st year of Clare Youth Theatre with a special performance planned for Ennis Book Club Festival. We will continue to support Music Generation's work with young people countywide and re-establish the Trad 4 Teens Programme in West Clare.

Arts and Disability

The Arts Office will continue working with over a dozen disability organisations in 2026, with a showcase of their work scheduled to take place in glór in May 2026. We will continue to work with our partners in Mayo and Galway City Arts Office to implement the recommendations of the Levelling Access Report.

Creative Places

The Arts Office will lead on the Arts Council's Creative Places Shannon three-year Plan in partnership with the local community. We will continue to promote Clare as a creative place through our support for arts festivals and events, and through our Culture Night programme building on the 45 events which took place in 2025. Creativity comes from the community and we will work with our partners to re-imagine our partnerships with older people through our programmes in St. Joseph's Hospital in Ennis and Raheen Hospital in Tuamgraney as well as national partnerships with the Bealtaine Festival. The Arts Office will continue to manage a suite of grants and bursaries for arts organisations, festivals and events supplementing the cultural and tourism offering of the county.

glór

In 2026, glór will continue to play a leading role in enhancing Clare's cultural life through a vibrant, year-round programme of music, theatre, dance, visual arts and community engagement. It will continue to support artists across all art forms, foster creative participation for people of all ages and backgrounds and deliver on strategic priorities of Creativity, Community and Capacity. Continued Council subsidy will enable glór to sustain high-quality programming, strengthen local partnerships and leverage external funding to maximise impact and value for the county.

PEOPLE AND CULTURE, CORPORATE SERVICES AND GOVERNANCE, ICT AND DIGITAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE

People and Culture

The People and Culture Department supports all departments in planning and delivering the Council's workforce requirements and creating a culture of continuous learning and development. In 2026, the team will continue to lead the implementation of the Council Equality and Human Rights Action Plan 2024-2029 and implement recruitment campaigns to attract talent to Clare County Council as an employer of choice to deliver the strategic priorities and objectives of the Council's Directorates.

Corporate Services and Governance

The Corporate Services and Governance Department will continue to provide a range of management and administration supports to Elected Members and management team, in addition to customer services, civic events management, communications and business innovation. In 2026, the team will continue to further enhance corporate governance and compliance with legislative requirements to include data protection, freedom of information, Irish language, and protected disclosures.

ICT & Digital Services

The ICT Department's priorities for 2026 are aligned with the National Local Government Digital Strategy. In 2026, ICT will continue to have an integral role in innovation and the delivery of both internal and external digital services to include systems to implement cyber security controls. The focus is to further broaden public digital access, automate internal workflow, reinforce staff training and uphold national digital and sustainability objectives.

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

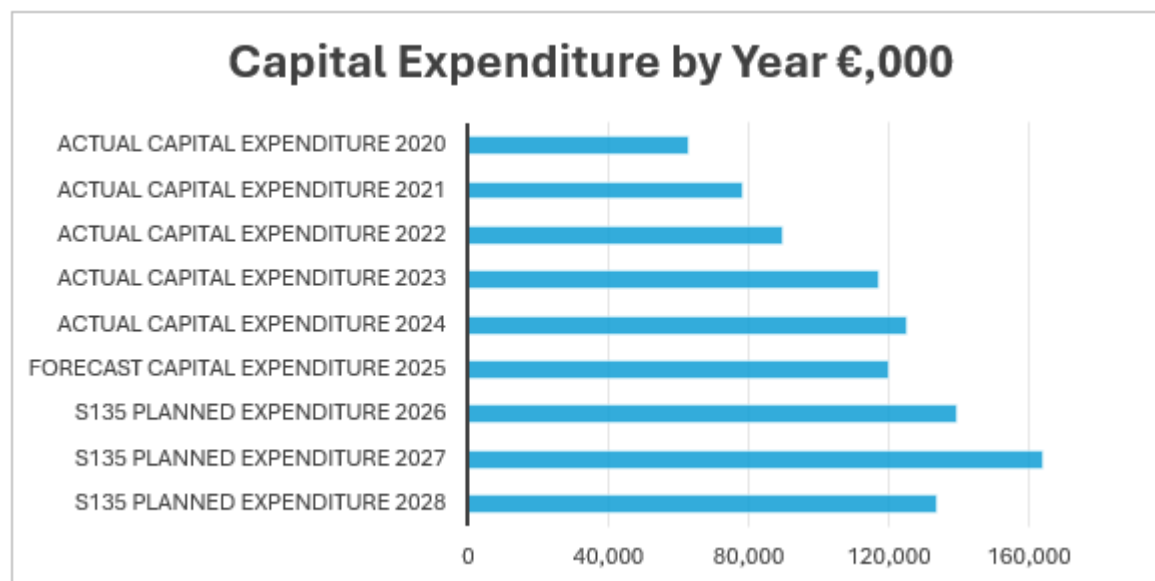
In line with Section 135 of the Local Government Act 2001, as amended by the Local Government Reform Act 2014, the Capital Investment Programme for the three-year period 2026-2028 is presented with this budget report. This programme outlines the Council's proposed capital expenditure across all Directorates for the coming years. Due to the timing and nature of Government grant allocations, the programme represents an indicative plan rather than a definite commitment, reflecting the Council's ambition for investment.

The projects included have a planned investment value exceeding €437m covering initiatives at various stages of delivery. This programme aligns closely with actual capital expenditure trends in recent years.

It also includes a pipeline of projects that will only advance subject to securing the necessary funding, with the scale primarily driven by an ambitious Housing Capital Programme aligned to national policy commitments.

Capital programmes are inherently multi-year and rolling in nature, subject to ongoing review and adjustment based on business case evaluations, grant application outcomes and the Council's capacity to fund projects from its own resources. The accompanying table provides details of historic capital expenditure and future projections. Further information is contained in the Section 135 Report which notes that approximately €78.7m in funding must be secured before certain projects can proceed.

Table 4: Capital Expenditure by Year



The revenue budget presented to Members provides for loan charges for the match funding element of some projects into 2026 as outlined earlier.

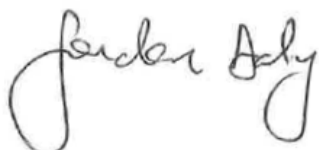
CONCLUSION

The preparation of this annual budget has been undertaken against a backdrop of persistent economic uncertainty, escalating costs and evolving national policy priorities. Notwithstanding these challenges, the Council's strengthened organisational structure and strategic focus will ensure that Clare County Council remains well positioned to deliver on its mandate - providing housing, infrastructure and local services, and fostering sustainable growth for the benefit of all communities.

I wish to formally acknowledge the professionalism and commitment of Council staff and the constructive engagement of Elected Members throughout the budget process. In framing this budget, particular regard has been given to Members' observations, notably in relation to the acceleration of housing delivery and the imperative need for continued investment in the county's roads infrastructure. These priorities are reflected in the proposals before you.

I also extend my appreciation to the Director of Finance, Investment and Enterprise, Ms Noleen Fitzgerald and her team for their exemplary co-ordination of the budget process and their support to both myself and the Council in ensuring the timely and comprehensive preparation of this document.

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Gordon Daly
Chief Executive

17th November 2025

Date



ADOPTED BUDGET 2026

TABLE A - CALCULATION OF ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR

Summary by Service Division	Expenditure €	Income €	Budget Net Expenditure 2026 €	%	Estimated Net Expenditure Outturn 2025 €	%
Gross Revenue Expenditure & Income						
A Housing and Building	47,158,498	42,159,706	4,998,792	8.0%	4,242,456	7.3%
B Road Transport & Safety	47,310,501	31,455,642	15,854,859	25.4%	13,964,923	24.1%
C Water Services	12,527,515	10,754,868	1,772,647	2.8%	1,319,674	2.3%
D Development Management	43,811,425	31,183,272	12,628,153	20.2%	11,206,268	19.4%
E Environmental Services	23,506,553	5,780,097	17,726,456	28.4%	17,050,807	29.5%
F Recreation and Amenity	15,226,472	1,759,784	13,466,688	21.6%	12,900,393	22.3%
G Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare	622,949	132,278	490,671	0.8%	473,040	0.8%
H Miscellaneous Services	14,058,013	18,506,175	(4,448,162)	(7.1%)	(3,303,655)	(5.7%)
	204,221,926	141,731,822	62,490,104	100.0%	57,853,906	100.0%
Provision for Debit Balance	-		-			
ADJUSTED GROSS EXPENDITURE AND INCOME (A)	204,221,926	141,731,822	62,490,104		57,853,906	
Financed by Other Income/Credit Balances						
Provision for Credit Balance		-	-			
Local Property Tax		12,493,043	12,493,043			
SUB-TOTAL (B)			12,493,043			
AMOUNT OF RATES TO BE LEVIED C=(A-B)			49,997,061			
Net Effective Valuation (E)			193,711,977			
GENERAL ANNUAL RATE ON VALUATION (C/E)			0.2581			

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
A Housing and Building								
A01 Maintenance & Improvement of LA Housing Units	7,287,975	7,287,975	10,746,241	10,746,241	6,802,480	7,153,245	10,057,241	10,570,241
A02 Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer	857,969	857,969	12,199	12,199	817,707	823,822	12,199	12,199
A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration	1,007,656	1,007,656	12,023	12,023	950,790	960,468	12,023	12,023
A04 Housing Community Development Support	1,370,972	1,370,972	49,804	49,804	1,370,214	1,376,382	49,804	49,804
A05 Administration of Homeless Service	5,613,289	5,613,289	4,560,792	4,560,792	4,544,179	5,560,422	3,647,546	4,547,546
A06 Support to Housing Capital Prog.	3,341,031	3,341,031	705,042	705,042	2,984,637	3,012,234	705,042	705,042
A07 RAS and Leasing Programme	15,083,784	15,083,784	15,109,483	15,109,483	14,044,681	14,928,345	14,234,483	15,119,483
A08 Housing Loans	1,068,199	1,068,199	563,157	563,157	1,091,817	1,042,194	642,157	583,157
A09 Housing Grants	11,120,762	11,120,762	10,164,577	10,164,577	7,551,419	10,551,216	6,709,577	9,709,577
A12 HAP Programme	406,861	406,861	236,388	236,388	380,965	394,588	251,388	251,388
Division A Total	47,158,498	47,158,498	42,159,706	42,159,706	40,538,889	45,802,916	36,321,460	41,560,460

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
B Road Transport & Safety								
B02 NS Road - Maintenance and Improvement	2,705,081	2,705,081	2,300,347	2,300,347	3,114,772	2,675,918	2,737,647	2,300,347
B03 Regional Road - Maintenance and Improvement	11,174,870	11,174,870	6,687,754	6,687,754	10,253,950	11,038,780	8,193,896	6,687,754
B04 Local Road - Maintenance and Improvement	26,152,172	26,152,172	19,622,524	19,622,524	24,050,687	24,703,260	16,376,882	19,512,524
B05 Public Lighting	2,763,829	2,763,829	181,853	181,853	2,490,356	2,560,264	181,853	181,853
B06 Traffic Management Improvement	216,614	216,614	261	261	202,296	202,385	261	261
B07 Road Safety Engineering Improvement	1,129,840	1,129,840	1,013,500	1,013,500	723,020	1,122,121	614,200	1,013,500
B08 Road Safety Promotion & Education	563,046	563,046	8,703	8,703	510,944	513,010	30,703	8,703
B09 Car Parking	1,310,917	1,310,917	1,617,523	1,617,523	1,254,201	1,260,144	1,617,523	1,617,523
B10 Support to Roads Capital Prog	1,294,132	1,294,132	23,177	23,177	1,239,314	1,234,683	23,177	23,177
Division B Total	47,310,501	47,310,501	31,455,642	31,455,642	43,839,540	45,310,565	29,776,142	31,345,642

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
C Water Services								
C01 Water Supply	5,551,847	5,551,847	5,331,331	5,331,331	5,898,758	5,131,930	5,671,592	4,921,592
C02 Waste Water Treatment	2,805,848	2,805,848	2,252,604	2,252,604	3,144,714	2,736,615	2,987,812	2,587,812
C03 Collection of Water and Waste Water Charges	364,848	364,848	293,115	293,115	412,471	331,967	389,855	309,855
C04 Public Conveniences	280,142	280,142	4,400	4,400	270,063	269,775	4,400	4,400
C05 Admin of Group and Private Installations	2,694,584	2,694,584	2,403,672	2,403,672	2,677,317	2,676,570	2,403,672	2,403,672
C06 Support to Water Capital Programme	496,832	496,832	418,260	418,260	583,515	402,253	554,478	374,478
C08 Local Authority Water and Sanitary Services	333,414	333,414	51,486	51,486	424,137	423,859	205,451	51,486
Division C Total	12,527,515	12,527,515	10,754,868	10,754,868	13,410,975	11,972,969	12,217,260	10,653,295

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
D Development Management								
D01 Forward Planning	1,851,187	1,851,187	295,385	295,385	1,576,145	1,603,479	25,385	115,385
D02 Development Management	2,143,240	2,143,240	515,348	515,348	2,014,350	2,052,240	443,348	515,348
D03 Enforcement	1,515,830	1,515,830	22,316	22,316	1,430,084	1,466,599	22,316	22,316
D05 Tourism Development and Promotion	26,739,551	26,739,551	25,928,041	25,928,041	28,292,805	26,198,135	27,595,385	25,736,051
D06 Community and Enterprise Function	5,968,183	5,968,183	2,512,229	2,512,229	5,703,326	5,785,597	2,511,247	2,527,229
D07 Unfinished Housing Estates	439,298	439,298	5,142	5,142	372,185	391,900	5,142	5,142
D08 Building Control	621,956	621,956	38,465	38,465	523,932	553,147	38,465	38,465
D09 Economic Development and Promotion	3,406,480	3,406,480	1,624,426	1,624,426	3,021,946	2,967,557	1,624,426	1,624,426
D10 Property Management	507,875	507,875	116,858	116,858	431,963	476,267	116,858	116,858
D11 Heritage and Conservation Services	437,368	437,368	125,062	125,062	422,388	422,148	132,868	132,868
D12 Agency & Recoupable Services	180,457	180,457	-	-	123,292	123,287	-	-
Division D Total	43,811,425	43,811,425	31,183,272	31,183,272	43,912,416	42,040,356	32,515,440	30,834,088

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
E Environmental Services								
E01 Landfill Operation and Aftercare	1,285,014	1,285,014	522,363	522,363	1,121,818	1,124,584	522,363	522,363
E02 Recovery & Recycling Facilities Operations	2,726,121	2,726,121	561,969	561,969	2,628,481	2,661,814	471,969	471,969
E05 Litter Management	1,305,011	1,305,011	48,788	48,788	1,265,942	1,289,371	48,788	48,788
E06 Street Cleaning	2,622,551	2,622,551	36,931	36,931	2,513,617	2,521,889	36,931	36,931
E07 Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement	771,296	771,296	276,805	276,805	697,535	696,689	276,805	276,805
E08 Waste Management Planning	258,461	258,461	112,713	112,713	237,791	247,540	87,213	112,713
E09 Maintenance of Burial Grounds	732,104	732,104	89,914	89,914	680,721	700,058	69,914	69,914
E10 Safety of Structures and Places	2,038,963	2,038,963	440,977	440,977	1,696,825	1,894,950	240,977	440,977
E11 Operation of Fire Service	9,080,508	9,080,508	2,893,525	2,893,525	8,199,034	8,353,076	2,251,927	2,251,927
E12 Fire Prevention	922,209	922,209	403,706	403,706	765,528	864,365	202,706	352,706
E13 Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution	1,254,221	1,254,221	167,854	167,854	1,073,455	1,185,582	174,116	167,854
E15 Climate Change and Flooding	510,094	510,094	224,552	224,552	488,589	488,388	224,552	224,552
Division E Total	23,506,553	23,506,553	5,780,097	5,780,097	21,369,336	22,028,306	4,608,261	4,977,499

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
F Recreation and Amenity								
F01 Leisure Facilities Operations	2,462,709	2,462,709	1,041,003	1,041,003	2,306,248	2,321,817	956,003	956,003
F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service	6,777,993	6,777,993	89,824	89,824	6,369,448	6,512,776	89,824	89,824
F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations	3,469,998	3,469,998	184,218	184,218	3,335,290	3,332,766	119,218	139,218
F04 Community Sport and Recreational Development	493,929	493,929	100,540	100,540	458,259	458,225	86,000	100,540
F05 Operation of Arts Programme	2,021,843	2,021,843	344,199	344,199	1,871,961	1,885,393	324,999	324,999
Division F Total	15,226,472	15,226,472	1,759,784	1,759,784	14,341,206	14,510,977	1,576,044	1,610,584

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
G Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare								
G02 Operation and Maintenance of Piers and Harbours	111,734	111,734	32,379	32,379	108,683	108,543	32,379	32,379
G04 Veterinary Service	478,799	478,799	99,899	99,899	419,796	466,903	99,899	99,899
G05 Educational Support Services	32,416	32,416	-	-	29,878	29,872	-	-
Division G Total	622,949	622,949	132,278	132,278	558,357	605,318	132,278	132,278

TABLE B: Expenditure and Income for 2026 and Estimated Outturn for 2025

Division & Services	2026				2025			
	Expenditure		Income		Expenditure		Income	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
H Miscellaneous Services								
H01 Profit & Loss Machinery Account	683,873	683,873	39,479	39,479	637,392	630,875	39,479	39,479
H03 Adminstration of Rates	7,359,594	7,359,594	87,241	87,241	7,602,238	7,116,527	87,241	87,241
H04 Franchise Costs	404,614	404,614	80,405	80,405	301,466	341,293	2,405	42,405
H05 Operation of Morgue and Coroner Expenses	322,311	322,311	3,306	3,306	295,690	304,870	3,306	3,306
H07 Operation of Markets and Casual Trading	78,738	78,738	20,845	20,845	76,819	76,783	20,845	20,845
H09 Local Representation & Civic Leadership	3,756,753	3,756,753	28,590	28,590	3,652,627	3,649,287	28,590	28,590
H10 Motor Taxation	1,276,967	1,276,967	61,169	61,169	1,182,606	1,222,472	61,169	61,169
H11 Agency & Recoupable Services	175,163	175,163	18,185,140	18,185,140	207,985	170,083	16,532,810	16,532,810
Division H Total	14,058,013	14,058,013	18,506,175	18,506,175	13,956,823	13,512,190	16,775,845	16,815,845
OVERALL TOTAL	204,221,926	204,221,926	141,731,822	141,731,822	191,927,542	195,783,597	133,922,730	137,929,691

TABLE C - CALCULATION OF BASE YEAR ADJUSTMENT					
Rating Authority	(i)	(ii)	(iii)	(iv)	(v)
	Annual Rate on Valuation 2026 €	Effective ARV (Net of BYA) 2026 €	Base Year Adjustment 2026 €	Net Effective Valuation €	Value of Base Year Adjustment €
<u>Clare County Council</u>	<u>0.2581</u>				
Clare County Council	0.2581	-	-	193,711,977	-
TOTAL				193,711,977	

Table D	
ANALYSIS OF BUDGET INCOME 2026 FROM GOODS AND SERVICES	
Source of Income	2026 €
Rents from Houses	12,006,000
Housing Loans Interest & Charges	441,000
Parking Fines & Charges	1,602,789
Uisce Éireann	4,762,135
Planning Fees	386,000
Recycling Charges	518,000
Fire Charges	500,000
Recreation/Amenity/Culture	1,106,000
Local Authority Contributions	109,500
Superannuation	1,273,682
Other income*	29,152,093
Total Goods & Services	51,857,199

*Other Income above is prescribed format but includes other fees and charges, for example:

Tourism Income

Sales/Leasing of Other Properties

Road Opening Licences

IPB Dividend

Local contributions to Local Improvement and Community Involvement Schemes

Dog Licences

Burial Ground Fees

Table E	
ANALYSIS OF BUDGET INCOME 2026 FROM GRANTS & SUBSIDIES	
	2026
	€
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	
Housing and Building	29,468,155
Water Services	5,761,871
Development Management	1,989,397
Environmental Services	2,987,916
Miscellaneous Services	17,865,632
Sub-total	58,072,971
Other Departments and Bodies	
TII Transport Infrastructure Ireland	1,978,246
Culture, Communications, & Sport	220,540
Defence	118,677
Arts Council	96,000
Transport	25,284,500
Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, & The Marine	10,000
Enterprise, Tourism, & Employment	1,283,929
Rural, Community Development, & The Gaeltacht	2,197,000
Climate, Environment, & Energy	219,360
Other	393,400
Sub-total	31,801,652
Total Grants & Subsidies	89,874,623



DIVISION A

Summary

The Housing Department provides housing supports to households who are unable to provide accommodation from their own resources. A range of supports and services are provided to vulnerable persons, housing applicants and housing tenants. Certain housing services are also provided to private tenants.

The Housing Department implements Government Policy in line with 'Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland'. Progressing the objectives and actions of the plan involves working in partnership with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH), Approved Housing Bodies, the Land Development Agency and the Housing Agency as well as the private sector.

A01 - Maintenance and Improvement of Local Authority Housing

Our housing stock continues to increase each year as we avail of all methods of delivery including new builds by the Council and the AHB sector, acquisitions and Part V delivery. The number of properties we manage and maintain now exceeds 3,000 and will continue to grow in 2026. As we continue to increase delivery, there is a consequential impact on the number and cost of properties to be refurbished before re-letting. Additional costs are also expected in 2026 due to an increase in contract and construction prices.

2025 will be the fifth year we have upgraded properties as part of the Energy Efficiency Retrofit Programme to meet the target of a B2/cost optimal BER. The programme provides for improvements to the fabric of the home including attic and external insulation, windows and door replacement, heat pump installation and low energy lighting. This programme is Department-funded. Funding for 28 properties was received in 2025 and these units have been completed. Additionally, capital replacement upgrades, for example, replacement windows, doors, plumbing, heating systems or insulation

insulation measures amongst other upgrades will be completed in 200 properties, which improves the quality of the overall housing stock and improves living conditions for our tenants. Climate action work to re-fit Council properties in the Kilkee area is expected to commence in 2026 subject to Department funding being available. It is hoped that this will increase the energy retrofit delivery output by an additional 30 properties per annum approximately.

Rents are reviewed annually with the objective of all tenants' rents being reviewed every 2 years. Collection rates are holding at a consistent 87% of all rents at present. Rental income will increase in 2026 by €0.67m due to the number of new properties being delivered and this additional income will be ringfenced within the service to support housing.

Traveller Accommodation

The Council will continue to provide a comprehensive range of on-site services to members of the traveller community including site management and maintenance and the provision of a mobile caretaker service and Traveller Liaison Person. A new Traveller Accommodation Programme for the period 2025-2029 was published in Q1 2025 and implementation of same will be monitored by the Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee. Department approval has been obtained for a number of upgrade works to properties in existing sites and this work will continue to be progressed through 2026.

A02 - Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer

The number of properties allocated in 2025 is expected to exceed 340. We expect the level of allocations to continue at this rate in 2026 with many new developments due to be delivered both by the Council and through AHBs. Applicants with disabled needs continue to be prioritised in accordance with our Social Housing Allocation Scheme and the County

Clare Housing Disability Strategy 2022-2027, while the needs of clients facing homelessness due to landlords exiting the private market are also being met.

A03 - Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration

This service reflects the administration costs of Tenant Purchase Schemes and Rents. Interest in the Tenant Purchase Scheme remains high with 9 properties sold to tenants to the end of Oct 2025 and 4 more to close before end of year. We expect this trend to continue in 2026. The Elected Members agreed to withhold all properties built or acquired since 2016 from the scheme and this will be reviewed at the end of the current Housing Delivery Plan in 2026.

A04 - Estate Management

Estate management is an integral part of the Housing Department's functions where the team proactively engage with and support tenants in sustaining their tenancies. Clare County Council enhanced the Housing Estate Management Unit by appointing 3 Tenancy Enforcement Officers (TEO) to support existing staff and to help address and enforce instances of anti-social behaviour in Local Authority tenancies in a more proactive manner.

2025 also saw the Council progress a number of repossession orders through the courts system in relation to anti-social behaviour, illegal occupancy and rent arrears and we will continue to stringently pursue same in 2026.

A05 - Administration of Homeless Service

The Homeless Action Team is based in Clare County Council's offices. The team provides support and advice to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, following assessment of their needs. Where appropriate, assistance can be given with emergency accommodation. The Homeless Action Team in Clare County Council was established in 2019. Since then, the Homeless Action Team has developed and expanded and it is hoped that this team growth will continue into the future.

Within this team a multi-disciplinary, inter-agency team approach has been employed and has proved to be most effective in providing outreach and additional specialist services and linking with mainstream services.

The Homeless Action Team continues to explore further support projects including the provision of a 9pm-to-9am Temporary Emergency Provision (TEP) if a suitable location can be sourced. In this respect, the estimated provision for homeless services in County Clare will be increased in 2026. The administration of homeless services is 90% funded with the Council funding the remaining 10% from its' revenue budget. Additionality for 2026 will increase net costs to the Council's revenue budget. The total 2026 provision of homeless services is €5.35m. The increase from 2025 is primarily linked to the increased need, and provision of emergency accommodation in hotels and B&Bs.

A06 - Support to Housing Capital

The provisions under A06 relate to operational costs and are primarily housing capital salaries that are not met from Department capital grants.

A07 - Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) and Leasing

The Long-Term Leasing (LTL), Repair to Lease and RAS schemes are important options for the delivery of housing. While LTL is being phased out, the increased budget provision in A0702 reflects the targets set by the DHLGH and the number of homes already delivered under leasing. The cost of leasing payments is recouped from the DHLGH. The increased provision for AHBs under Payment and Availability Agreements in A0703 reflects the increased delivery of new homes by AHBs in partnership with the Council. These payments are fully recouped from the DHLGH. For 2026, the RAS administration payment will be circa €210k and is recoupable from the Department based on the number of RAS tenancies we support.

A08 - Housing Loans

Housing loans provide for the income and expenditure for mortgage loans as managed by Clare County Council. Changes to the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme came into effect in March 2023. These changes increased the house price limit band from €250k to €300k for Clare and increased the income limit from €50k to €70k for single applicants and €75k to €85k for joint applications. The Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan was introduced in July 2024 to enable applicants to buy and renovate a derelict or uninhabitable home which are eligible under the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant. This has opened the opportunity for Local Authority Home Loans to a far greater cohort of Clare's households and will continue in 2026.

Nineteen loan applications have been received and 5 home loans were approved in principle totalling €875,650 to the end of Sept 2025. The Housing Department will continue to administer the Local Authority Home Loan Scheme in 2026.

A09 - Housing Grants

The Housing Department administers the Housing Grant Schemes for private houses. This suite of grants provides grant assistance for elderly and disabled people through Housing Adaptation, Housing Aid for Older People and Mobility Aid Grants. The grant levels vary based on household income and cost of works involved.

Note: Household income is the only factor considered for the grant. No account is taken of cash reserves or assets owned by the applicant. The demand for private house grants continues to be strong and exceeds available resources year-on-year. Funds are targeted at essential works only to ensure that optimum benefit is derived from limited resources. Inflation and general rising construction costs are adding extra pressures to the grants process as applicants struggle to deal with additional costs incurred over the grants support provided.

A new on-line grants system is now in place which facilitates applicants to apply electronically. This will streamline the grants system and enable applicants to log on and see the status of their application. Approval and administration of when works are completed can also be done through this system. The housing staff are always available to assist applicants with this new process.

The funding model of housing grants changed in 2025 to an 85/15 split where this Council will have to fund 15% of expenditure from budgetary resources. Budget 2026 allows for a €500k increase in Housing Grants.

A12 - Housing Assistance Payment

The implementation of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme provides housing assistance to households with long-term housing needs by enabling them to find accommodation in the private sector. Clare County Council's HAP Team provides the administrative support in processing of applications for clients and landlords, along with conducting rent reviews. Payments by clients and payments to landlords are processed through Shared Services in Limerick City & County Council. For 2026, the administration payment will be circa €230k and is recoupable quarterly from the Department based on the number of HAP tenancies we support.

Sub-Service Description – Division A

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
A01	Maintenance & Improvement of LA Housing Units	
A0101	Maintenance of LA housing units	Maintenance of Council housing stock including re-lets, reactive maintenance requests, planned maintenance & security of vacant properties and energy retrofits.
A0102	Maintenance of traveller accommodation sites	Routine maintenance costs relating to traveller accommodation.
A0103	Traveller accommodation management	Renovation of vacant units, clean-ups, hire of plant and security of properties.
A02	Housing Assessment, Allocation & Transfer	
A0201	Assessment of Housing Needs, allocations & transfers.	Processing of housing & transfer applications.
A03	Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration	
A0301	Debt management & rent assessment	Costs associated with rent assessment, collection & arrears management.
A04	Housing Community Development Support	
A0401	Housing estate management	Management of housing estates through estate committees.
A0402	Tenancy management	Tenancy management costs including elimination of anti-social behaviour.
A0403	Social & Community Housing Service	
A05	Administration of Homeless Service	
A0502	Homeless services	Assessment & placement service for homeless persons. Delivery of temporary emergency accommodation & tenancy sustainment services to those that are at risk of homelessness.
A06	Support to Housing Capital Programme	
A0601	Technical & administrative support	Housing capital administration team costs.
A0602	Loan charges	Repayment of loan charges for voluntary housing bodies. These loan charges are fully recoupable.
A07	RAS & Leasing Programme	
A0701	RAS operations	Costs associated with Rental Accommodation Scheme which include payments to landlords. These costs are recoupable net of tenant rents.
A0702	Social leasing	Long term leasing of units. These costs are fully recoupable net of tenant rents.
A08	Housing Loans	
A0801	Loan interest & other charges	Costs associated with management of house purchase loans, payment of loan charges to HFA on mortgage-related borrowing. Repayments from borrowers are also included.
A0802	Debt management housing loans	Costs associated with assessment, collection & arrears management.

A09	Housing Grants	
A0904	Housing grant payments	Grants provided to private homeowners who are either elderly or disabled & are 85% recoupable. Also includes Vacant and Derelict Sites Grants.
A12	HAP Programme	
A01201	HAP operations	Costs associated with administration of Housing Assistance Payments.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division A - Housing and Building				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
A0101 Maintenance of LA Housing Units	5,369,896	5,369,896	4,969,114	5,320,614
A0102 Maintenance of Traveller Accommodation Units	575,031	575,031	564,299	566,499
A0103 Traveller Accommodation Management	235,589	235,589	226,487	231,987
A0199 Service Support Costs	1,107,459	1,107,459	1,042,580	1,034,145
A01 Maintenance & Improvement of LA Housing Units	7,287,975	7,287,975	6,802,480	7,153,245
A0201 Assessment of Housing Needs, Allocs. & Trans.	461,900	461,900	448,656	455,656
A0299 Service Support Costs	396,069	396,069	369,051	368,166
A02 Housing Assessment, Allocation and Transfer	857,969	857,969	817,707	823,822
A0301 Debt Management & Rent Assessment	473,333	473,333	450,738	461,738
A0399 Service Support Costs	534,323	534,323	500,052	498,730
A03 Housing Rent and Tenant Purchase Administration	1,007,656	1,007,656	950,790	960,468
A0401 Housing Estate Management	504,169	504,169	546,772	554,172
A0402 Tenancy Management	290,219	290,219	283,557	283,557
A0403 Social and Community Housing Service	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
A0499 Service Support Costs	571,584	571,584	534,885	533,653
A04 Housing Community Development Support	1,370,972	1,370,972	1,370,214	1,376,382
A0501 Homeless Grants Other Bodies	4,910,240	4,910,240	3,895,100	4,895,100
A0502 Homeless Service	392,923	392,923	365,583	382,583
A0599 Service Support Costs	310,126	310,126	283,496	282,739
A05 Administration of Homeless Service	5,613,289	5,613,289	4,544,179	5,560,422
A0601 Technical and Administrative Support	1,489,352	1,489,352	1,187,307	1,220,307
A0602 Loan Charges	991,000	991,000	995,000	995,000
A0699 Service Support Costs	860,679	860,679	802,330	796,927
A06 Support to Housing Capital Prog.	3,341,031	3,341,031	2,984,637	3,012,234
A0701 RAS Operations	2,760,087	2,760,087	2,731,122	2,731,122
A0702 Long Term Leasing	11,989,486	11,989,486	11,086,084	11,971,084
A0799 Service Support Costs	334,211	334,211	227,475	226,139
A07 RAS and Leasing Programme	15,083,784	15,083,784	14,044,681	14,928,345
A0801 Loan Interest and Other Charges	657,818	657,818	703,643	654,843
A0802 Debt Management Housing Loans	183,108	183,108	173,684	173,684
A0899 Service Support Costs	227,273	227,273	214,490	213,667
A08 Housing Loans	1,068,199	1,068,199	1,091,817	1,042,194

Table F - Expenditure				
Division A - Housing and Building				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
A0904 Other Housing Grant Payments	10,131,615	10,131,615	6,575,985	9,575,985
A0905 Mobility Aids Housing Grants	793,000	793,000	793,000	793,000
A0999 Service Support Costs	196,147	196,147	182,434	182,231
A09 Housing Grants	11,120,762	11,120,762	7,551,419	10,551,216
A1201 HAP	291,869	291,869	273,366	287,366
A1299 HAP Service Support Costs	114,992	114,992	107,599	107,222
A12 HAP Programme	406,861	406,861	380,965	394,588
Division A Total	47,158,498	47,158,498	40,538,889	45,802,916

Table F - Income				
Division A - Housing and Building				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	29,468,155	29,468,155	24,236,909	29,034,909
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	29,468,155	29,468,155	24,236,909	29,034,909
Goods & Services				
Rents from Houses	12,006,000	12,006,000	11,340,000	11,840,000
Housing Loans Interest & Charges	441,000	441,000	500,000	441,000
Superannuation	131,551	131,551	131,551	131,551
Other income	113,000	113,000	113,000	113,000
Total Goods & Services	12,691,551	12,691,551	12,084,551	12,525,551
Division A Total	42,159,706	42,159,706	36,321,460	41,560,460

The image features a light blue background with several concentric yellow circular brushstrokes of varying sizes. In the center is a circular aerial photograph of a roundabout. The roundabout has a central green island with a small tree and a paved road with several cars. The text "DIVISION B" is overlaid on the center of the roundabout in a large, white, sans-serif font.

DIVISION B

Summary

Division B includes provision for the maintenance and improvement of roads, public lighting, road safety, car parking and support to the road's capital programme.

Like previous years, the budget for Transportation has been prepared in the absence of notification of road grant allocations from both Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) and the Department of Transport for 2026 and consequently assumes a similar level of funding as in 2025.

B01 National Primary and B02 Secondary Roads – Maintenance and Improvement

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) provides funding for all maintenance and improvement works on Clare's motorway, national primary and secondary road network including pavement renewals, public lighting maintenance, ordinary maintenance and winter maintenance.

The national primary network in Clare is managed and maintained exclusively by the TII except for the cost of the power component of its public lighting which the Council is allocated a grant of €0.2m to cover. Clare County Council carries out improvements to the national secondary network in relation to national secondary overlay and pavement renewal; winter maintenance and public lighting with the funding provided by TII. The overall TII allocation to Clare in 2025 was €2.1m (includes capital).

B03 - Regional Road - Maintenance and Improvement

The Department of Transport (DoT) provides funding to Clare County Council towards the maintenance, management and improvement of the regional and local road network through the following grants: Restoration Improvement; Restoration Maintenance; Discretionary; Drainage; Safety Improvement Works, Bridge Rehabilitation, Climate Change Adaption Works and Community Involvement

Schemes. The Department of Transport also provides funding for Strategic and Regional Local Roads projects such as the Shannon Bridge Crossing. The DoT allocation to Clare County Council in 2025 was €39.4m (includes capital) and a similar allocation is expected for 2026.

It is anticipated that specific national funding will again be made available by the Department of Rural and Community Development & the Gaeltacht for the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) for non-public roads in 2026. A grant allocation of €1.65m was made available under the LIS in 2025.

B04 - Local Road - Maintenance and Improvement

Clare County Council complements the funding received from the Department of Transport for regional and local road improvements and maintenance through its own resources.

In this regard, €3.2m in roads own resources funding was made available in the Scheme of Municipal District Works in 2025. A total of €4.2m is included in the 2026 budget.

B05 - Public Lighting

Public Lighting Section manages and maintains 15,356 public lights within the county, in urban, industrial and rural areas, regional and local roads, as well as residential developments that have been taken in charge.

Public lighting remains the single largest consumer of power for the Council, and albeit that this has reduced over the past year due to the ongoing retrofit of existing lighting, an increase in lighting stock with progression of taking-in-charge of private estates does result in additional consumption.

Energy-saving measures commenced in Clare in 2015 and have been ongoing since, with the replacement of lamps with higher efficiency LED lamps under the maintenance programme. In response to the ongoing inflated energy costs, opportunities where savings can be made are being investigated such as trimming (reducing the lighting hours)

at suitable locations and retrofit of floodlights to LEDs.

Clare County Council continues its engagement in the South-Western Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP) and has agreed to use loan funding for the capital investment required to undertake the project. The retrofit programme commenced under PLEEP in late 2024 and has been ongoing during 2025 with a scheduled completion date in Clare in late 2025. Budget 2026 provides for this loan finance.

Although 2025 saw a reduction in energy prices, the recent announcement of the hike in energy prices shall soften gains achieved through retrofitting LEDs through our maintenance contract and PLEEP.

The OGP Frameworks for Metered and Unmetered electricity supplies are also being utilised by Clare County Council to procure competitive energy rates.

The annual budget provides for the cost of public lighting including maintenance. The signing of a new maintenance contract in 2024 following the exit from the market of the appointed maintenance contractor for Clare resulted in increased rates accounting for inflation on the rates in the previous contract being set back in 2019. In 2025, this contract was extended given that there is no alternative contractor on the market and due to the success of the existing contractor in reducing outage numbers across our lighting stock. The completion of works under PLEEP shall result in a reduction of the works required under the maintenance contract. The total budget for public lighting energy costs including repairs and maintenance is €2.7m.

B06 – Traffic Management Improvement

B07 – Road Safety Engineering Improvement

In 2025, a total of €640k was allocated to Clare County Council to enable safety improvement works to be carried out on various roads. The 2026 budget has provided a similar allocation.

B08 - Road Safety Promotion/Education

Budget 2026 provides €358k for the provision of the School Warden service and the promotion of road safety.

B09 - Car Parking

The Transportation Department is responsible for the maintenance and management of parking areas throughout the county.

Parking bye-laws and pay & display facilities are currently in operation in Ennis, Kilrush, Kilkee, Lahinch and Doolin. A review of parking bye-laws in the county will be undertaken in 2026 and this will inform future budgets.

B10 - Support to Roads Capital Programme

The Roads Capital Programme will be concentrated on the roads infrastructural improvements required for the implementation of the Council's strategy, including:

- Ennistymon Inner Relief Road
- Shannon Airport Access Road

Costs associated with developing these projects are primarily borne in the revenue budget.

Sub-Service Description – Division B

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
B01	National Primary Road - Maintenance & Improvement	
B0101	National Primary Roads	Maintenance of national primary roads.
B02	National Secondary Road - Maintenance & Improvement	
B0204	NS – Winter Maintenance	Sanding & gritting of secondary roads over winter months.
B0207	NS - General Improvement Works	General improvement works to national secondary roads.
B03	Regional Road - Maintenance & Improvement	
B0301	Regional Road Surface Dressing	Maintenance and improvement of regional roads surface dressing.
B0304	Regional Road Bridge Maintenance	Survey of local & regional bridges.
B0305	Regional Road General Maintenance Works	Maintenance of regional roads & footpath network including grass cutting, guard-rails, safety fences, road signs, etc.
B04	Local Road - Maintenance & Improvement	
B0401	Local Road Surface Dressing	Maintenance and improvement of local roads surface dressing.
B0402	Local Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	Local roads overlay, road restoration and reconstruction programmes.
B0405	Local Roads General Maintenance Works	Maintenance of local roads & footpath network including grass cutting, guard-rails, safety fences, road signs, etc. Also Bridge Maintenance Programme, Footpath Programme & Road Restoration Programme.
B0406	Local Roads General Improvement Works	
B05	Public Lighting	
B0501	Public Lighting Operating Costs	Costs of public lighting including energy, general maintenance & repairs. Also includes costs associated with the LED lantern replacement programme.
B06	Traffic Management Improvement	
B0699	Service Support Costs	Support costs associated with traffic management improvement programmes.
B07	Road Safety Engineering Improvement	
B0701	Low-Cost Remedial Measures	Costs associated with the implementation & delivery of low-cost remedial measures.
B08	Road Safety Promotion & Education	
B0801	School Wardens	Costs associated with the operation of school warden service at various locations.
B0802	Publicity & Promotion Road Safety	Costs in relation to road safety publicity & promotion which includes cycle training programme in schools.

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
B09	Car Parking	
B0901	Maintenance & Management of Car Parks	Maintenance of car park meters, barriers, surfacing, signs & lines. Also includes income from off-street parking.
B0902	Operation of Street Parking	Ongoing provision of on-street parking including the purchase, installation & maintenance of on-street parking meters, signs & lines. Also cash collection and issuing permits.
B0903	Parking Enforcement	Warden service, court costs & parking enforcement.
B10	Support to Roads Capital Programme	
B1001	Administration of Roads Capital Programme	Costs associated with support provided for the roads capital programme.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division B - Road Transport & Safety				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
B01 NP Road - Maintenance and Improvement	133,701	133,701	125,638	125,548
B0204 NS - Winter Maintenance	129,406	129,406	129,406	129,406
B0206 NS - General Maintenance	237,009	237,009	237,009	237,009
B0207 NS - General Improvement Works	1,930,500	1,930,500	2,367,800	1,930,000
B0299 Service Support Costs	408,166	408,166	380,557	379,503
B02 NS Road - Maintenance and Improvement	2,571,380	2,571,380	2,989,134	2,550,370
B0301 Regional Roads Surface Dressing	565,370	565,370	565,370	565,370
B0302 Reg Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	5,485,158	5,485,158	4,717,800	5,485,158
B0304 Regional Road Bridge Maintenance	689,500	689,500	615,000	689,500
B0305 Regional Road General Maintenance Works	3,011,000	3,011,000	3,039,000	2,991,000
B0399 Service Support Costs	1,423,842	1,423,842	1,316,780	1,307,752
B03 Regional Road - Maintenance and Improvement	11,174,870	11,174,870	10,253,950	11,038,780
B0401 Local Road Surface Dressing	2,860,916	2,860,916	2,859,042	2,859,042
B0402 Local Rd Surface Rest/Road Reconstruction/Overlay	10,999,692	10,999,692	9,914,550	10,999,692
B0405 Local Roads General Maintenance Works	4,001,715	4,001,715	3,806,454	2,966,818
B0406 Local Roads General Improvement Works	1,722,000	1,722,000	1,282,000	1,722,000
B0499 Service Support Costs	6,567,849	6,567,849	6,188,641	6,155,708
B04 Local Road - Maintenance and Improvement	26,152,172	26,152,172	24,050,687	24,703,260
B0501 Public Lighting Operating Costs	2,664,080	2,664,080	2,397,080	2,467,080
B0599 Service Support Costs	99,749	99,749	93,276	93,184
B05 Public Lighting	2,763,829	2,763,829	2,490,356	2,560,264
B0699 Service Support Costs	216,614	216,614	202,296	202,385
B06 Traffic Management Improvement	216,614	216,614	202,296	202,385
B0701 Low Cost Remedial Measures	1,013,500	1,013,500	614,200	1,013,500
B0799 Service Support Costs	116,340	116,340	108,820	108,621
B07 Road Safety Engineering Improvement	1,129,840	1,129,840	723,020	1,122,121
B0801 School Wardens	273,979	273,979	273,979	273,979
B0802 Publicity and Promotion Road Safety	84,100	84,100	46,073	49,073
B0899 Service Support Costs	204,967	204,967	190,892	189,958
B08 Road Safety Promotion & Education	563,046	563,046	510,944	513,010

Table F - Expenditure				
Division B - Road Transport & Safety				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
B0901 Maintenance and Management of Car Parks	358,500	358,500	352,500	358,397
B0902 Operation of Street Parking	91,646	91,646	91,549	91,549
B0903 Parking Enforcement	511,235	511,235	485,012	486,512
B0999 Service Support Costs	349,536	349,536	325,140	323,686
B09 Car Parking	1,310,917	1,310,917	1,254,201	1,260,144
B1001 Administration of Roads Capital Programme	393,196	393,196	406,678	406,678
B1099 Service Support Costs	900,936	900,936	832,636	828,005
B10 Support to Roads Capital Prog	1,294,132	1,294,132	1,239,314	1,234,683
Division B Total	47,310,501	47,310,501	43,839,540	45,310,565

Table F - Income				
Division B - Road Transport & Safety				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
TII Transport Infrastructure Ireland	1,978,246	1,978,246	2,915,546	1,978,246
Transport	25,284,500	25,284,500	23,367,700	25,284,500
Rural, Community Development, & The Gaeltacht	1,650,000	1,650,000	1,210,000	1,650,000
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	28,912,746	28,912,746	27,493,246	28,912,746
Goods & Services				
Parking Fines & Charges	1,602,789	1,602,789	1,602,789	1,602,789
Superannuation	292,707	292,707	292,707	292,707
Other income	647,400	647,400	387,400	537,400
Total Goods & Services	2,542,896	2,542,896	2,282,896	2,432,896
Division B Total	31,455,642	31,455,642	29,776,142	31,345,642



DIVISION C

Summary

Clare County Council holds responsibility for the Rural Water Programme with the responsibility for municipal water and wastewater treatment now resting with Uisce Éireann.

The Rural Water Programme includes the management of projects involving new or upgrading of Group Water and Sewerage Schemes under the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme. The programme also provides grants for domestic bored wells under a devolved programme. Clare County Council also facilitates and compiles the submissions for taking-in-charge applications to Uisce Éireann for Group Water and Sewerage Schemes. Funding for these continues to be provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

C01 - Water Supply

C02 - Wastewater Treatment

C03 - Collection of Water & Wastewater Charges

C06 - Support to Water Capital Programme

Since 20th September 2023, Uisce Éireann (UÉ) have taken charge of the management and direction of the delivery of water services under the terms of the Master Co-Operation Agreement. The Council will continue to support Uisce Éireann in the delivery of this function until the end of 2026 in line with this agreement. Costs incurred by the Council in the provision of this support service are recouped in full.

The new agreement signed by this Council captures the arrangements for payment by UÉ for direct water services related costs. Service support costs are no longer being funded by UÉ but directly from DHLGH.

C04 - Public Conveniences

Provision has been made for the continued operation, maintenance and cleaning of public conveniences.

C05 - Admin of Group and Private Installations

C08 - Local Authority Sanitary Services

Clare County Council maintains its statutory function for Group Water and Sewerage Schemes and bored well grants. Expenditure under this heading includes the anticipated total to be paid in operational subsidies to group schemes which is recouped in full from the DHLGH. Budget 2026 has provided €2.25m in respect of this grant.

With effect from 1st January 2024, Uisce Éireann have been assigned responsibility for the remediation of Developer Provided Infrastructure (DPI). It is not the intention that Uisce Éireann will immediately take charge of any roles that are currently being undertaken at present by the developers, owners and users of DPI infrastructure. Any such current operating and maintenance arrangements for each site should remain in place pro-tem. The role of Uisce Éireann will be to continue any roles undertaken by Local Authorities to maintain and operate such infrastructure.

Sub-Service Description – Division C

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
C01	Water Supply	
C0101	Water Plants & Networks	Maintenance & operation of the water networks - costs associated with the Master Co-takeover Operation Agreement (MCA) for water services provided by Uisce Éireann.
C02	Wastewater Treatment	
C0201	Waste Plants and Networks	Operation & maintenance of the drainage network - costs associated with the Master Co-takeover Operation Agreement (MCA) for water services provided by Uisce Éireann.
C03	Collection of Water and Wastewater Charges	
C0301	Debt Management Water and Wastewater	Collection & management of water and wastewater charges - costs associated with the Master Co-takeover Operation Agreement (MCA) for water services provided by Uisce Éireann.
C04	Public Conveniences	
C0401	Public Conveniences	Provision, maintenance & cleaning of public conveniences.
C05	Administration of Group & Private Installations	
C0504	Group Water Scheme Subsidies	Well grants/group schemes.
C06	Support of Water Capital Programme	
C0601	Technical Design & Supervision	Water and drainage capital projects - costs associated with the Master Co-takeover Operation Agreement (MCA) for water services provided by Uisce Éireann.
C08	Local Authority Water & Sanitary Services	
C0801	Local Authority Water & Wastewater	Costs associated with surface water drainage & flood alleviation.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division C - Water Services				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
C0101 Water Plants & Networks	3,279,146	3,279,146	3,656,596	2,906,596
C0199 Service Support Costs	2,272,701	2,272,701	2,242,162	2,225,334
C01 Water Supply	5,551,847	5,551,847	5,898,758	5,131,930
C0201 Waste Plants and Networks	1,234,374	1,234,374	1,564,259	1,164,259
C0299 Service Support Costs	1,571,474	1,571,474	1,580,455	1,572,356
C02 Waste Water Treatment	2,805,848	2,805,848	3,144,714	2,736,615
C0301 Debt Management Water and Waste Water	162,161	162,161	223,595	143,595
C0399 Service Support Costs	202,687	202,687	188,876	188,372
C03 Collection of Water and Waste Water Charges	364,848	364,848	412,471	331,967
C0401 Operation and Maintenance of Public Conveniences	269,771	269,771	260,771	260,771
C0499 Service Support Costs	10,371	10,371	9,292	9,004
C04 Public Conveniences	280,142	280,142	270,063	269,775
C0504 Group Water Scheme Subsidies	2,251,000	2,251,000	2,251,000	2,251,000
C0599 Service Support Costs	443,584	443,584	426,317	425,570
C05 Admin of Group and Private Installations	2,694,584	2,694,584	2,677,317	2,676,570
C0601 Technical Design and Supervision	235,657	235,657	339,622	159,622
C0699 Service Support Costs	261,175	261,175	243,893	242,631
C06 Support to Water Capital Programme	496,832	496,832	583,515	402,253
C0801 Local Authority Water Services	48,009	48,009	143,596	143,596
C0802 Local Authorities Sanitary Services	209,000	209,000	209,000	209,000
C0899 Local Authority Service Support Costs	76,405	76,405	71,541	71,263
C08 Local Authority Water and Sanitary Services	333,414	333,414	424,137	423,859
Division C Total	12,527,515	12,527,515	13,410,975	11,972,969

Table F - Income				
Division C - Water Services				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	5,761,871	5,761,871	5,618,603	5,464,638
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	5,761,871	5,761,871	5,618,603	5,464,638
Goods & Services				
Uisce Éireann	4,762,135	4,762,135	6,367,795	4,957,795
Superannuation	226,462	226,462	226,462	226,462
Other income	4,400	4,400	4,400	4,400
Total Goods & Services	4,992,997	4,992,997	6,598,657	5,188,657
Division C Total	10,754,868	10,754,868	12,217,260	10,653,295



DIVISION D

Summary

Division D has a broad remit and makes provision for the activities of Forward Planning Infrastructure, Planning Infrastructure, Development Management, Tourism, Community and Social Inclusion, Economic Development and Enterprise to include the Local Enterprise Office, Conservation, Heritage and Biodiversity.

D01 - Forward Planning

The Forward Planning Section's primary focus is on planning policy and active land management.

The areas that will require the greatest attention and workload from a forward planning perspective in 2026 under statutory requirements include on-going monitoring and reporting on the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, undertake a variation to the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, meeting statutory requirements associated with the Residential Zoned Land Tax, Vacant Sites Levy and Marine Spatial Planning.

D02 - Development Management

The number of planning applications received to date in 2025 is 985. Determinations have been made on 847 planning applications, of which 782 were granted and 65 were refused. Of the 43 applications determined by An Coimisiún Pleanála, 33 decisions of the Clare County Council were upheld.

The introduction of e-planning has streamlined and improved efficiencies in the planning process by reducing the potential for invalid applications and delivering on the Government strategy to move more public services online. To date in 2025, 654 e-planning applications have been received.

D03 - Enforcement

Enforcement activity levels have increased from levels seen in 2023 and 2024.

To date in 2025, a total of 217 enforcement complaints have been received. Of these complaints, 117 were deemed to require action and enforcement files were set up. It is expected that this level of activity will continue for the remainder of the year and into 2026. These new complaints vary from significant to minor breaches of the planning code. In addition, there are a significant number of legacy files that remain open and under investigation.

D05 - Tourism Development and Promotion

Budget 2026 is broadly in line with the 2025 budget. This provides for the management and maintenance of the Council-owned tourism sites as well as the broader promotion of County Clare as a sustainable tourism destination.

As provided for in budget 2026 and set out in the Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, during 2026 there will be additional focus on:

- Festivals and events in County Clare.
- Strengthening the night-time economy, particularly in Ennis and key towns across the county.
- Promotion of County Clare as a year-round sustainable destination on a local, national and international basis.
- Recognition of Clare, both nationally and internationally, as a destination committed to responsible, sustainable tourism as validated by the EarthCheck Destination Standard awarded in 2025.

D0601 - Rural Development

The Rural and Community Development Department's Rural Work Programme is broad and varied, with communities at the core of our service provision as follows:

- Implementation of the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2030
- Community Capacity Building
- Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) work (plans, programmes and funding opportunities) including Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)
- Local Economic and Community Plan 2030 (LECP)
 - Local Enhancement Programme (LEP)
 - Healthy Clare
- National and Local Funding Schemes including:
 - Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF)
 - Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Projects CLÁR
 - Town and Village Renewal Projects Clare Local Area Grants Scheme (CLAGS)
- Clare Age Friendly Strategy
- Community Playground and Burial Grounds
- Pride of Place and Tidy Towns Supports
- Community Resilience and Supports
- Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP)

D0603 - Social Inclusion

Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

Under the Local Community Development Committee (LCDC), Rural Development are responsible for the co-ordination and monitoring of the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP) through the programme implementors contracted by the LCDC. The programme tackles poverty and social exclusion at a local level through

engagement and partnerships between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies. Budget 2026 allows for the same level of support in accordance with the new SICAP programme 2023-2029.

Ukrainian Services/Local Authority Integration Team

During 2025, multi-agency responses at all levels aligned with community and volunteering efforts meant that many services were enhanced, and that message and outcomes were understood at local level.

As the year progressed, it became clear through an exercise of accommodation consolidation by the Department of Justice that the numbers of Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection had begun to reduce in the county. At the same time, global geopolitics, economics and climate change have impacted on the numbers of people on the move internationally. In Ireland, those seeking international protection increased and in Clare, this population adjustment also became apparent with existing centres signing new contracts with the International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS).

The Local Authority Integration Team (LAIT) team works alongside the Ukrainian Services Team and on a cross-Directorate, cross-agency basis throughout Clare. LAITs have been set up in all Local Authorities. Their purpose is to help co-ordinate the different kinds of support available for people who are applying for international protection, refugees and others in similar situations. LAIT also continues to promote inclusion and integration at community level through the facilitation of community clinics open to all members of the community.

As we look forward to 2026, the LAIT are leading Community Integration Forums at both a countywide and regional level with strong levels of engagement.

The forums play a key role in strengthening working relationships with our partner agencies such as the Clare Immigrant Support Centre, Clare Local Development Company (CLDC), TUSLA – Child and Family Agency, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB), An Garda Síochána and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to name a few.

It is proposed to develop a Migrant Action Plan in 2026 which will be aligned to the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP), County Sport Plan and the Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Ukrainian Services and Local Authority Integration Team are budgeted as cost neutral to this Council in 2026.

D0609 - Digital Hubs

DigiClare is an initiative of Clare County Council which provides a county-wide network of flexible and affordable hot desks and co-working spaces where individuals and small teams can work.

The network enables Clare residents and visitors to work locally in a fresh, dynamic and safe environment that provides global connection through high-speed broadband.

All DigiClare Hubs include individual hot desks and highspeed broadband.

Other facilities, which can vary by location, include co-working desks, private workspace units, privacy and zoom booths, board rooms, meeting rooms and training rooms.

DigiClare is also a member of the Connected Hubs Network, a Government of Ireland initiative, which offers people the opportunity to work comfortably and securely in professional environments all over Ireland.

We have 11 hubs at present and these consist of Council-owned facilities and community hubs. DigiClare's Hubs are located at:

- Corofin, North Clare
- Cross, West Clare
- Ennis, Co. Clare
- Ennistymon, North Clare

- Feakle, East Clare
- Flagmount, East Clare
- Inagh, North Clare
- Kilrush, West Clare
- Kilkee, West Clare
- Miltown Malbay, West Clare
- Sixmilebridge, South Clare

D07 - Unfinished Housing Estates

In 2025 to date, 3 estates have been taken-in-charge with further developments being progressed through the statutory process.

A substantial programme of remedial works on existing private housing developments is being carried out to bring these developments to taking-in-charge standard. These works will significantly improve the appearance of these developments.

The Planning Department is currently monitoring 27 housing developments under construction, incorporating over 600 housing units and these developments will all be completed in the next 12-15 months.

D08 - Building Control

The Building Control Authority is responsible for the enforcement of the Building Control Acts 1990-2014 and Regulations made under those Acts.

The national Building Control Management System (BCMS) website provides for the completion of a mandatory online assessment. It also allows for the online submission of applications for Fire Safety Certificates and Disability Access Certificates.

Under the Construction Products Regulations, the Building Control Authority has responsibilities for market surveillance of construction products within County Clare.

D0901 - Economic Development and Promotion

This area contains the primary Economic Development budget for Clare County Council.

The main initiatives provide economic development promotion, support of public realm works and support to businesses such as the Long-Term Vacant Property Incentive Scheme, by encouraging the re-occupation of vacant premises in commercial areas. This scheme will continue to apply in 2026.

Also for 2026, the Economic Development Strategy includes the following:

- Review Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy.
- Advance public realm and placemaking opportunities to activate towns and villages across the county.
- Explore alternative solutions and options for the delivery of the Kilrush Maritime Training Centre and the utilization of the allocated funding.
- Explore the opportunities for Clare County Council associated with the identification of the Shannon Estuary as a Renewable Energy Acceleration Area in conjunction with the relevant statutory authorities on the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan Steering Group for the Shannon Estuary and the further benefits associated with the preparation of an associated plan.

D0903 - Twinning

During 2026, Clare County Council Twinning Committee will build on established relationships with our twinned cities/regions to strengthen economic links while continuing to harness mutually beneficial tourism opportunities.

D0906 - Local Enterprise Office (LEO)

The Local Enterprise Office (LEO) is operated on a Service Level Agreement (SLA) basis on behalf of Enterprise Ireland. The LEO administers grants for micro startups and provides a range of supports and mentoring programmes for all businesses operating in the County. The remit of the LEO was expanded to incorporate a suite of supports for enterprises employing more than 10 people.

To date in 2025, 1009 people have participated in our training programmes of which 100 undertook our Start Your Own Business course.

351 one-to-one mentor supports have also been provided to assist enterprises overcome specific business challenges. On the funding side, 22 applications have been approved funding of €517,398 for Measure 1 financial support.

Budgets for training and mentoring support are expected to be broadly similar in 2026. 97 productivity support grants were approved in 2025 to date in the sum of €365k.

The Council provides a net cost of circa €183k above Enterprise Ireland supports for this service.

D10 - Property Management

The Property Management Unit is responsible for the management of Council-owned land and buildings, including leasing and licensing for property and buildings. Activation of lands and property will be a key focus in 2026. Dealing with title, wayleaves, property acquisition and sales are dealt with by the Property Management Unit, thus ensuring good governance on property transactions.

Income arising from leasing of Council-owned properties and buildings and grazing of land is included for in the budget.

D11 - Heritage and Conservation Services

As part of the Forward Planning Section, the primary focus on heritage, biodiversity and conservation for 2026 includes:

- Facilitation of the Heritage and Biodiversity Forum
- Implementation of the Clare County Heritage Plan 2024-2030
- Implementation of the Clare County Biodiversity Plan 2024-2030
- Delivery of grant-aided projects for Heritage, Conservation and Biodiversity

Sub-Service Description – Division D

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
D01	Forward Planning	
D0101	Statutory Plans & Policy	Review of the County Development Plan & on-going preparation of Local Area Plans.
D02	Development Management	
D0201	Planning Control	Costs & income associated with the planning process. Development management which includes e-Planning & electronic scanning of planning applications. Evaluation & reporting on roads, traffic, parking & sustainable travel aspects of planning applications done by Transportation Section.
D03	Enforcement	
D0301	Enforcement Costs	Planning enforcement costs.
D05	Tourism Development & Promotion	
D0501	Tourism Promotion	Management of tourism & promotion and tourism initiatives. Implementation of Tourism Strategy.
D0502	Tourist Facilities Operations	Operational costs associated with management of all tourism sites.
D06	Community & Enterprise Function	
D0601	General Community & Enterprise Expenses	Costs associated with rural development including Public Participation Networks, LCDC, Healthy Ireland and Age Friendly initiatives.
D0602	RAPID Costs	Costs associated with the RAPID programme.
D0603	Social Inclusion	Costs associated with social inclusion events & activities to promote social inclusion and cultural diversity. Ukrainian Response costs.
D07	Unfinished Housing Estates	
D0701	Unfinished Housing Estates	Provision for taking-in-charge of private housing estates.
D08	Building Control	
D0801	Building Control Inspection Costs	Building control expenses which have associated income, eg. Commencement Notices, Disability Access Certificates.
D09	Economic Development & Promotion	
D0901	Urban and Village Renewal	Costs associated with renewal schemes.
D0903	Town Twinning	Twinning with other jurisdictions.
D0905	Economic Development & Promotion	Costs associated with the promotion of economic development including Vacant Property Grants.
D0906	Jobs, Enterprise & Innovation	Administration of Local Enterprise Office on an SLA basis for Enterprise Ireland. Most of the costs associated with this service are recouped from Enterprise Ireland. Activities include processing grant applications for start-ups & micro-businesses and an extensive programme of training and mentoring which is available to all businesses.

D10	Property Management	
D1001	Property Management Costs	Management of Local Authority property portfolio including refurbishment, maintenance, leasing, security, property tax, Property Interest Register & valuers' fees.
D11	Heritage & Conservation Services	
D1101	Heritage Services	Costs associated with the heritage service.
D1102	Conservation Services	Costs associated with the conservation service and biodiversity.
D1103	Conservation Grants	Grants receivable and payable for conservation projects.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division D - Development Management				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
D0101 Statutory Plans and Policy	1,238,630	1,238,630	998,996	1,027,996
D0199 Service Support Costs	612,557	612,557	577,149	575,483
D01 Forward Planning	1,851,187	1,851,187	1,576,145	1,603,479
D0201 Planning Control	1,137,818	1,137,818	1,078,987	1,118,987
D0299 Service Support Costs	1,005,422	1,005,422	935,363	933,253
D02 Development Management	2,143,240	2,143,240	2,014,350	2,052,240
D0301 Enforcement Costs	936,463	936,463	888,769	926,769
D0399 Service Support Costs	579,367	579,367	541,315	539,830
D03 Enforcement	1,515,830	1,515,830	1,430,084	1,466,599
D0501 Tourism Promotion	1,542,743	1,542,743	1,307,803	1,317,803
D0502 Tourist Facilities Operations	24,535,676	24,535,676	26,372,845	24,272,845
D0599 Service Support Costs	661,132	661,132	612,157	607,487
D05 Tourism Development and Promotion	26,739,551	26,739,551	28,292,805	26,198,135
D0601 General Community & Enterprise Expenses	2,644,284	2,644,284	2,471,499	2,557,999
D0602 RAPID Costs	81,941	81,941	79,137	79,137
D0603 Social Inclusion	1,885,388	1,885,388	1,882,320	1,882,320
D0699 Service Support Costs	1,356,570	1,356,570	1,270,370	1,266,141
D06 Community and Enterprise Function	5,968,183	5,968,183	5,703,326	5,785,597
D0701 Unfinished Housing Estates	324,106	324,106	264,331	284,331
D0799 Service Support Costs	115,192	115,192	107,854	107,569
D07 Unfinished Housing Estates	439,298	439,298	372,185	391,900
D0801 Building Control Inspection Costs	105,894	105,894	65,000	65,000
D0802 Building Control Enforcement Costs	378,678	378,678	331,662	361,662
D0899 Service Support Costs	137,384	137,384	127,270	126,485
D08 Building Control	621,956	621,956	523,932	553,147
D0901 Urban and Village Renewal	313,000	313,000	168,000	168,000
D0903 Town Twinning	33,000	33,000	33,000	33,000
D0905 Economic Development & Promotion	1,238,524	1,238,524	1,067,707	1,017,707
D0906 Local Enterprise Office	1,366,859	1,366,859	1,331,966	1,331,966
D0999 Service Support Costs	455,097	455,097	421,273	416,884
D09 Economic Development and Promotion	3,406,480	3,406,480	3,021,946	2,967,557
D1001 Property Management Costs	399,692	399,692	331,248	376,248
D1099 Service Support Costs	108,183	108,183	100,715	100,019
D10 Property Management	507,875	507,875	431,963	476,267

Table F - Expenditure				
Division D - Development Management				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
D1101 Heritage Services	81,871	81,871	79,239	79,239
D1102 Conservation Services	175,024	175,024	169,612	169,612
D1103 Conservation Grants	75,000	75,000	75,000	75,000
D1199 Service Support Costs	105,473	105,473	98,537	98,297
D11 Heritage and Conservation Services	437,368	437,368	422,388	422,148
D1299 Service Support Costs	180,457	180,457	123,292	123,287
D12 Agency & Recoupable Services	180,457	180,457	123,292	123,287
Division D Total	43,811,425	43,811,425	43,912,416	42,040,356

Table F - Income				
Division D - Development Management				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	1,989,397	1,989,397	1,658,538	1,832,203
Enterprise, Tourism, & Employment	1,283,929	1,283,929	1,283,929	1,283,929
Rural, Community Development, & The Gaeltacht	547,000	547,000	547,000	547,000
Other	296,400	296,400	292,083	296,400
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	4,116,726	4,116,726	3,781,550	3,959,532
Goods & Services				
Planning Fees	386,000	386,000	386,000	386,000
Superannuation	183,862	183,862	183,862	183,862
Other income	26,496,684	26,496,684	28,164,028	26,304,694
Total Goods & Services	27,066,546	27,066,546	28,733,890	26,874,556
Division D Total	31,183,272	31,183,272	32,515,440	30,834,088

An aerial photograph of a dense, green forest with a golf course visible in the lower right. The image is framed by a circular window. The background of the entire page is a solid blue color with several overlapping, hand-drawn style green circles and arcs.

DIVISION E

Summary

Division E includes the operation of civic management, street cleaning, monitoring and enforcement of waste regulations, the operation of cemeteries, the cost of the fire service, lifeguards and climate change.

The 2026 work programme for the Environment Section will again be driven by an extensive regulatory framework contained in the annual Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspection (RMCEI) Plan which involves 9,800 inspections and the National Enforcement Priorities 2025-2027.

E01 - Recycling Operation and Aftercare

The 2026 budget will allow for the continued operations of the Civic Amenity Site at the Central Waste Management Facility (CWMF) in Ballyduffbeg, Inagh. In addition, the budget will also fund the green waste composting facility and the newly created wetland which will increase biodiversity at the site.

The 2026 budget will continue to support environmental monitoring and maintenance to meet Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) licence requirements at Ballyduffbeg and the other closed landfill sites at Doora and Lisdeen.

Further efforts will continue in 2026 in applying for Certificates of Authorisation for historic closed landfills. Funding for these certificate applications, including remediation works identified, is through central government funding under the Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy.

E02 - Recovery and Recycling Facilities Operations

Clare County Council operates 5 Civic Amenity Sites at Scarriff, Ennis, Shannon, Lisdeen and Ballyduffbeg.

The 2026 allocation is provided to also cover the cost of servicing Clare County Council's network of 50 full-time and 4 seasonal bring banks which are situated throughout the county.

To ensure the best possible value is achieved in awarding textile contracts, textile collections will be tendered in Q1 2026.

In addition, the Recycling Service is part-funded by a combination of income which includes Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) subvention, subsidies under the Packaging Regulations (REPAK), fees from collection of clothes, metals and batteries as well as income generated from recycling charges collected at the various amenity sites. This income will form part of the overall income review in 2026 for this Council.

E05 - Litter Management

(Education and Awareness/Anti-Litter Grant Scheme)

The Environmental and Community Wardens enforce the Litter Pollution and Waste Management Acts and other litter control measures in the county. Their duties include investigating illegal dumping, fly posting, abandoned vehicles, assisting local resident associations with clean ups and issuing fines for littering offences.

The Environmental Awareness Officer works closely with schools, community groups, residents' associations and businesses to promote environmental awareness, recycling, climate action and mitigation programmes. Across Clare, 109 schools participate in the An Taisce Green Schools Programme. Green flags were awarded to 17 schools in 2025.

The total fund for the Anti-Litter Grant Scheme in Clare for 2025 was €28k. This scheme is 70% grant-funded through the

Department of Communications, Climate Action and the Environment. It is anticipated that a similar allocation will be received in 2026.

Clare County Council received an additional €70k in Department funding under the Anti-Dumping Initiative (ADI) which facilitates, among other projects, amnesty days at Civic Amenity Sites.

E06 - Street Cleaning

The Street Cleaning Section assists in the corporate goal of providing and maintaining a high-quality public realm by maintaining the streets of County Clare to a safe and high standard. Budget 2026 provides €2.1m for the provision of these services an increase of €50k.

E07 - Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement

The Enforcement Unit monitors and enforces compliance with waste legislation along with regulations governing air and noise pollution. Complaints in respect of illegal dumping, air pollution and noise pollution are investigated and environmental inspections are carried out. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications' Annual Waste Enforcement Grant to Clare County Council is €222k.

The 2026 budget reflects Community Warden resourcing which means that each Municipal District (MD) has a specific resource to address complaints. In addition, as required annually by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Clare County Council will develop and submit an Environmental Inspection Plan for 2026 (Recommended Minimum Criteria for Environmental Inspections – RMCEI). The 2026 budget provides for the resources considered necessary to deliver on the targets set out in this annual inspection plan as well as unplanned inspections arising from complaints received or incidents of environmental pollution.

E08 - Waste Management Planning

The first National Waste Management Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in 2024 and replaced the South-Western Region Waste Management Plan. This National Plan sets out a framework for the prevention and management of waste in Ireland for the period 2024-2030. In addition, the Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 will also provide the legislative basis around waste planning. Clare County Council contribute €33k towards the operation of the Southern Region Waste Management Office annually.

E09 - Maintenance of Burial Grounds

Burial Grounds is an essential service and Clare County Council remains committed to providing an efficient and professional service.

The development of a new Burial Grounds Policy is underway and is expected to conclude by the end of 2025. It is anticipated that the policy will be adopted in early 2026. This policy will define a framework for the services, needs and resources required to support this function into the future.

E1001 - Operation Costs Civil Defence

Budget 2026 provides for a contribution to the provision of this service.

Recruitment and training of volunteers continues with extensive training regimes in place to ensure that Civil Defence continues to provide support to communities throughout County Clare and the Principal Response Agencies when tasked by An Garda Síochána, Clare County Council and the National Ambulance Service.

E1002 - Dangerous Structures

Dangerous structures complaints decreased in 2025 compared to the same period in 2024. While progress has been made on a number of open files, legal action has had to be taken in a small number of cases due to lack of co-operation. Such actions increase the workload in this area. This function continues to be dealt with by the Building Control Section under the Local Government (Sanitary Services) Act 1964. Budget

2026 provides for the same budget level as previous years.

E1003 - Emergency Planning

Clare County Council maintains the essential elements of preparedness, ie. the people, plans and facilities to be ready to respond to major emergencies throughout County Clare. Budget allocation to facilitate this continues in 2026.

Senior personnel participate in Regional Steering and Working Groups on Major Emergency Management. These groups comprise of colleagues from Tipperary County Council, Limerick City & County Council, Health Service Executive, National Ambulance Service, An Garda Síochána, Irish Coastguard and the Defence Forces.

Clare County Council prepares for major emergencies by participating in large-scale multi-agency exercises. Exercises and familiarization that took place in 2025 included ESB Ardnacrusha, Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team Exercise, Limerick Tunnel, Shannon Fuel Farm and Shannon Airport.

E1004 - Derelict Sites

The Land Activation, Derelict Sites and Property Management Unit is increasing its ambition in taking strong action on derelict sites, and significant progress has been made in this area in recent years. Currently there are 300 active files and of those, there are 100 on the Derelict Sites Register.

Compulsory acquisition processes are underway or completed on 32 properties, with 15 commenced in 2025. Of those acquired or being acquired by Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), some will be refurbished for social housing, some will be sold on the open market and others may be used for the business of the Council.

Budget 2026 provides for the strengthening of the team for this work which is a key pillar of Government policy. The billing of the Derelict Sites Levy which is 7% of the value of the property per annum is well underway and additional properties added to the Derelict Sites Register will be valued and billed in 2026. In 2025 to date, the sum of €330k has been billed on the levy. Engagement with property owners continues and all owners are advised of options available to them, including the Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant, option to sell the property or re-develop it.

E1005 - Water Safety Operation

In total, Clare County Council has 14 bathing locations which are tested in accordance with the EU Bathing Water Regulations.

It is intended to continue to direct resources towards the monitoring and management necessary to maintain the quality of our bathing waters, in addition to retaining lifeguard services to the appropriate levels for 2026.

In 2025, 52 lifeguards were employed during the summer months. Lifeguard cover was provided full-time at the 4 large beaches of Lahinch, Spanish Point, Fanore and Kilkee from 31st May 2025 through to the end of August and for weekends until the 14th Sept 2025. The service also provided weekend lifeguard cover at the remaining blue flag beaches in June, full-time cover for July and August and weekends in September.

The Lifeguard Digitization Project, which was funded under the Public Service Innovation Fund from the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform, was developed to convert the old paper-based log-book system to digital. The ICT Department designed an android-based app and created a dashboard for supervisors of all beaches to

record and monitor data in a more efficient and co-ordinated way. Lifeguards can now report incidents in real-time allowing for faster response times and more efficient management of beach safety. This has proven to be a successful project and its use will continue throughout 2026.

E11 - Operation of Fire Service

2025 has seen a 10% increase in emergency callouts throughout the county compared to the same period last year.

Clare County Council will continue to implement the remaining Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) proposals for the Retained Fire Service. The enhanced conditions of employment for Retained Firefighters have enabled the Fire Service to successfully recruit personnel, with an increase in retained personnel to 85 currently from a recent low of 63 personnel. Once completed, the outcome of the WRC implementation will increase the number of Retained Firefighter posts across the county from 78 to 90. This increase has involved a substantial amount of training and procurement of equipment to ensure that all personnel are training and equipped appropriately. This increase in training, carried out primarily by inhouse Fire Service instructors, will continue over the next 3-5 years.

Clare County Council's Fire Service continues to implement energy-saving measures across Fire Stations in collaboration with the Climate Action and Energy Management Team.

Payments to other Fire Authorities is included in this service. Limerick City and County Council call-out charges have increased by circa €11k for Budget 2026.

E12 - Fire Prevention

Fire Safety Certificate applications for new construction works to date in line with prior years, with 96 applications received for projects across the county.

Clare County Fire & Rescue Service personnel continued to engage in Community Fire Safety Projects throughout 2025 with over 2,500 hours completed to date in 2025. Our Community Fire safety projects include initiatives such as the Schools Programme, where Firefighters visit primary schools and deliver a fire safety programme to younger children, home fire safety visits where householders receive a home fire safety check, fire safety advice and smoke alarms are fitted if required.

Budgets in this area remain in line with prior years.

E13 - Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution

The Environment Department makes provision in its' budget for costs related to water and air quality and strategic noise mapping plans for the county as part of regional and national plans.

The Water Pollution Control Section monitors water quality in the county's streams, carries out domestic wastewater treatment inspections, farm inspections and inspections of domestic and commercial properties for wrongly connected foul sewer pipes to surface waters. Pollution events are also investigated.

One of the key goals is the River Basin Management Plan 3rd cycle 2022-2027 which prioritises the management of water as a resource. The Environment Section operates a Water Scientific Services Team and Laboratory and Technical Support Team working on drinking water, bathing water, shellfish waters plus river and lake management.

In addition, a membership fee is paid annually to the Shannon Estuary Anti-Pollution Team (SEAPT) of €14k. Membership of SEAPT is extremely important to prevent and mitigate pollution incidences in the Shannon Estuary and adjoining coastal counties.

E15 - Climate Change Support

The Climate Section is engaged in all aspects of climate action across the organisation. This includes supporting each Directorate to achieve their climate targets but also creating awareness and building capacity within our communities across County Clare.

The Climate Action Plan was adopted by the Council in February 2024. Whilst its' focus is towards the 2030 timeline, its' ultimate aim is to work towards the National Strategic Objective which is "to achieve a competitive, low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050". Externally, the Council is committed to continuing to work with the Climate Action Regional Office (CARO) Atlantic Seaboard South who will provide guidance and support on how climate change adaptation and mitigation measures can continue to be implemented in County Clare.

The first phase of the Community Climate Action Programme began in 2024. As a fully-funded scheme, the Climate Team has supported communities by implementing place-based climate action focusing on diverse themes from energy, biodiversity to circular economy. Phase 2 launched in October 2025 and this will allow the Climate Section to engage with even more local community groups across the county.

Mainstreaming climate action across all Directorates is key going forward. Climate change responsibility is therefore embedded across Directorates.

Agency & Recoupable Services

The Limerick Clare Energy Agency is a shared resource between Clare County Council and Limerick City and County Council to play a major role in the areas of:

- Energy management
- Climate change mitigation and adaptation
- Renewable energy
- Sustainable communities

The agency continues to develop the ISO50001 Energy Management System, energy awareness initiatives, energy target reductions and efficiency operating procedures.

In addition, the agency aids the Planning Department and other sections in the areas of energy efficient design, strategic energy and emissions analysis and rural and community energy awareness.

Sub-Service Description – Division E

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
E01	Recycling Operation & Aftercare	
E0101	Recycling Operations	Costs associated with operation of countywide recycling sites
E0103	Recycling Aftercare Costs	Remediation of retired recycling sites.
E02	Recovery & Recycling Facilities Operations	
E0201	Recycling Facilities Operations	Costs & income associated with recycling centres including operation of the facility.
E0202	Bring Centre's Operations	Costs associated with bring banks. Provision of CCTV to prevent illegal dumping and waste recycling costs.
E05	Litter Management	
E0501	Litter Warden Service	Litter Warden service & litter enforcement costs.
E0502	Litter Control Initiatives	Litter Warden service control initiatives.
E0503	Environmental Awareness Services	Costs including Green Schools, Tidy Districts, Environmental Awareness Programmes, Green Business & Environment Grants.
E06	Street Cleaning	
E0601	Operation of Street Cleaning Service	Costs of operating a road sweeping, litter bin emptying, gully cleaning, weed control service, collection of illegally dumped material and laneway cleaning.
E07	Waste Regulations, Monitoring & Enforcement	
E0702	Enforcement of Waste Regulations	Enforcement of environmental regulations
E08	Waste Management Planning	
E0801	Waste Management Plan	Supports for Regional Waste Office.
E09	Maintenance of Burial Grounds	
E0901	Maintenance of Burial Grounds	Maintenance of burial grounds.
E10	Safety of Structures & Places	
E1001	Operation Costs Civil Defence	Operation of the Civil Defence.
E1002	Dangerous Buildings	Making dangerous structures safe.
E1003	Emergency Planning	Preparation & implementation of Major Emergency Plan.
E1004	Derelict Sites	Costs associated with management of derelict sites.
E1005	Water Safety Operation	Provision of lifeguards & equipment at beaches & water safety initiatives.
Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
E11	Operation of Fire Service	
E1101	Operation of Fire Brigade Service	Operation of the Fire Service.
E1103	Fire Services Training	Costs associated with Fire Service training.
E12	Fire Prevention	
E1201	Fire Safety Control Cert Costs	Fire Safety Certs income and expenditure.
E1202	Fire Prevention and Education	Costs for prevention and education initiatives.
E1203	Inspection/Monitoring of Commercial Facilities	Cost associated with inspection, security and monitoring of commercial facilities.
E13	Water Quality, Air & Noise Pollution	
E1301	Water Quality Management	Costs associated with water quality including testing.

E15	Climate Change & Flooding	
E1501	Climate Change Support	Implementation of Climate Change Strategy. Agency & recoupable services.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division E - Environmental Services				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
E0101 Landfill Operations	949,099	949,099	717,995	721,995
E0103 Landfill Aftercare Costs.	107,895	107,895	188,189	188,189
E0199 Service Support Costs	228,020	228,020	215,634	214,400
E01 Landfill Operation and Aftercare	1,285,014	1,285,014	1,121,818	1,124,584
E0201 Recycling Facilities Operations	1,855,492	1,855,492	1,807,833	1,848,533
E0202 Bring Centres Operations	231,800	231,800	231,800	231,800
E0204 Other Recycling Services	-	-	-	-
E0299 Service Support Costs	638,829	638,829	588,848	581,481
E02 Recovery & Recycling Facilities Operations	2,726,121	2,726,121	2,628,481	2,661,814
E0501 Litter Warden Service	75,799	75,799	64,613	64,613
E0502 Litter Control Initiatives	320,489	320,489	320,086	320,086
E0503 Environmental Awareness Services	354,141	354,141	326,883	351,883
E0599 Service Support Costs	554,582	554,582	554,360	552,789
E05 Litter Management	1,305,011	1,305,011	1,265,942	1,289,371
E0601 Operation of Street Cleaning Service	2,117,918	2,117,918	2,048,946	2,061,946
E0699 Service Support Costs	504,633	504,633	464,671	459,943
E06 Street Cleaning	2,622,551	2,622,551	2,513,617	2,521,889
E0701 Monitoring of Waste Regs (incl Private Landfills)	-	-	-	-
E0702 Enforcement of Waste Regulations	487,961	487,961	430,186	430,186
E0799 Service Support Costs	283,335	283,335	267,349	266,503
E07 Waste Regulations, Monitoring and Enforcement	771,296	771,296	697,535	696,689
E0801 Waste Management Plan	160,103	160,103	147,538	157,538
E0899 Service Support Costs	98,358	98,358	90,253	90,002
E08 Waste Management Planning	258,461	258,461	237,791	247,540
E0901 Maintenance of Burial Grounds	360,812	360,812	334,614	354,614
E0999 Service Support Costs	371,292	371,292	346,107	345,444
E09 Maintenance of Burial Grounds	732,104	732,104	680,721	700,058
E1001 Operation Costs Civil Defence	320,779	320,779	305,459	308,759
E1002 Dangerous Buildings	35,320	35,320	34,967	34,967
E1003 Emergency Planning	121,059	121,059	117,691	117,691
E1004 Derelict Sites	661,352	661,352	371,854	571,854
E1005 Water Safety Operation	484,675	484,675	484,671	484,671
E1099 Service Support Costs	415,778	415,778	382,183	377,008
E10 Safety of Structures and Places	2,038,963	2,038,963	1,696,825	1,894,950

Table F - Expenditure				
Division E - Environmental Services				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
E1101 Operation of Fire Brigade Service	7,337,906	7,337,906	6,509,666	6,669,166
E1103 Fire Services Training	333,000	333,000	333,000	333,000
E1199 Service Support Costs	1,409,602	1,409,602	1,356,368	1,350,910
E11 Operation of Fire Service	9,080,508	9,080,508	8,199,034	8,353,076
E1201 Fire Safety Control Cert Costs	7,500	7,500	7,500	7,500
E1202 Fire Prevention and Education	708,190	708,190	564,864	664,864
E1203 Inspection & Monitoring of Commercial Facilities	18,000	18,000	18,000	18,000
E1299 Service Support Costs	188,519	188,519	175,164	174,001
E12 Fire Prevention	922,209	922,209	765,528	864,365
E1301 Water Quality Management	960,595	960,595	796,883	909,883
E1399 Service Support Costs	293,626	293,626	276,572	275,699
E13 Water Quality, Air and Noise Pollution	1,254,221	1,254,221	1,073,455	1,185,582
E1501 Climate Change and Flooding	411,010	411,010	395,166	395,166
E1599 Service Support Costs	99,084	99,084	93,423	93,222
E15 Climate Change and Flooding	510,094	510,094	488,589	488,388
Division E Total	23,506,553	23,506,553	21,369,336	22,028,306

Table F - Income				
Division E - Environmental Services				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	2,987,916	2,987,916	2,206,580	2,350,318
Defence	118,677	118,677	118,677	118,677
Climate, Environment, & Energy	219,360	219,360	219,360	219,360
Other	97,000	97,000	97,000	97,000
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	3,422,953	3,422,953	2,641,617	2,785,355
Goods & Services				
Recycling Charges	518,000	518,000	518,000	518,000
Fire Charges	500,000	500,000	445,000	445,000
Superannuation	167,644	167,644	167,644	167,644
Local Authority Contributions	109,500	109,500	84,000	109,500
Other income	1,062,000	1,062,000	752,000	952,000
Total Goods & Services	2,357,144	2,357,144	1,966,644	2,192,144
Division E Total	5,780,097	5,780,097	4,608,261	4,977,499

DIVISION F



Summary

This Division incorporates a wide range of services designed to provide and maintain high quality amenities, sporting and cultural activities. Included in this division are libraries, parks, beaches, sports, community development and arts.

F01 - Leisure Facilities Operation

The budget for leisure facilities operation is used to support the Active Ennis Leisure Complex - a complete indoor health and fitness arena providing a 25m pool, children's pool and gym-based activities for all individuals and clubs in Ennis and across the county.

Activities in the pool area include the following:

- Primary schools swim lessons
- Secondary schools swim program
- Weekend and weekday Swimming Lesson Program with more than 1300 participants
- Aqua Aerobics classes – over 50+ participants 4 times/week
- Swim Club (11 sessions per week)
- Masters Swim Club (2 sessions per week)
- Group hire (Clare Water Safety, Clare Pony Club, Ennis Sub-Aqua Club, Underwater Hockey, Ballyalla Bravehearts)
- Facilitating Clare Sport Partnership Swim Programs
- Hosting Lifeguard Instructor and Swim Teacher National Training Courses
- Hosting National Community Games and Swim Galas.

Weekly classes in our aerobic studio includes body blast, lunch crunch, Tai Chi, Pilates, Yoga, Irish dancing, sculpt & shred class, barbell blast, step aerobics, circuit training, back to basics exercise class and Unislim class.

Budgets in this area also include contributions to external bodies leisure facilities. Clare County Council makes a provision annually in its revenue budget to assist:

- Shannon Swimming and Leisure Centre
- Lahinch Leisure Centre

- Kilkee Waterworld
- Clarisford Park, Killaloe

F02 - Operation of Library and Archival Service

The budget supports the maintenance and upkeep of 15 libraries throughout the county (9 full-time and 6 part-time). The branches are strategically placed across the county. The strong physical presence of a network of branches within each Municipal District (MD) with extensive opening hours catering for all age groups allows for the provision of a wide range of services that are a valuable resource in terms of culture, heritage, literacy and education.

The National Library Strategy 2023-2027 “The Library is the Place: Information, Recreation, Inspiration” and the Clare Library Development Plan (Charting the Future – the hybrid library 2023-2027) both influence the programming and development of the library service on an annual basis. The 3 broad themes of Reading and Learning, Spaces and Buildings and Culture and Community adopted in the local plan set the guidelines for development of the service moving forward.

Additional to this, the ALL Literacy Strategy and the Creative Ireland Strategy both advance the co-ordination of programmes locally in line with national standards and will continue into 2026.

The new library in Ennis opened in November 2024 and has set the standard for library provision on the west coast. The branch operates over 2 floors and consists of distinct areas for children/teenagers and adult members of the community. The Local Studies Centre showcases The Clare Collection, genealogical resources and all aspects of Clare history. Budget 2026 provides for the operation and maintenance of this new development.

The library service will commence the procurement of a new mobile library vehicle in 2026. Grant aid of €250k has been secured with commitment for the shortfall of €115,828 made. This new service will provide the basis for expansion of the service into rural and remote communities in keeping with commitments to the Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) 2024-2030 and the Library Development Plan 2023-2027.

Archives: The digitization programme is continuing into 2026 and membership of the Digital Repository of Ireland secures the future preservation of digitized files going forward. The section continues to work on acquired collections and encourage new deposits.

F03 - Outdoor Leisure Operations

Budgets in this area are used to manage parks and maintain circa 64 hectares of public open space throughout the county. These include:

- Active Ennis John O’Sullivan Park, Lees Road - 3 grass playing fields, floodlit all-weather pitch, floodlit 400m synthetic running track, playground, skatepark, 130 acres of woodland, 3 car parks with approximately 350 spaces, 8 dressing rooms and public toilets.
- Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park - 2 grass playing fields, 400m grit running track, 2 playgrounds, multi-use game area, outdoor gym, 2 dressing rooms, public toilets and meeting room.
- Active Ennis Pitch, Coote Park - 1 grass playing field, 2 dressing rooms, toilets and store and 1 playground.
- Active Ennis Pitch, Glenina - 1 grass playing field.
- Active Ennis Gordon Drive - floodlit all-weather pitch, 2 dressing rooms and store.
- Active Kilrush Sports Complex - 2 grass playing fields, floodlit all-weather pitch,

floodlit 400m grit running track, 2 tennis courts, 2 dressing rooms and toilets, 1 playground at Cappa.

Currently there are:

- 238 clubs/organisations registered with Lee’s Road
- 64 registered in Cloughleigh Astroturf
- 25 clubs/organisations registered in Active Ennis Tim Smythe Park
- 4 clubs registered in Active Ennis Coote Park
- 58 clubs/organisation registered in Active Kilrush Sports Complex.

F0302 - Playgrounds

The health and wellbeing agenda remains a core priority for the Rural and Community Development Department with increasing demand for more accessible and extended facilities for physical recreation and sports.

Community playgrounds which are owned, managed and operated by Community Playground Committees remain a focus for Budget 2026. While serving the local community, these recreational facilities provide a further opportunity to support integration, youth and age-friendly, tourism and other initiatives within the community. Clare County Council will continue to support the sustainability of community-operated facilities of this nature.

2026 Playground Grants will be used to continue predictive and preventative maintenance while also supporting substantial repairs and equipment replacement in playgrounds across the county. In supporting community playgrounds, Clare County Council will seek to ensure that community groups promote inclusivity in playgrounds as age-friendly, neuro-diverse recreational spaces for all.

F0303 - Beaches

The International Blue Flag Awards in 2025 saw the retention and award of 9 blue flags for Clare beaches and 5 Green Coast Awards.

In total, Clare County Council has 14 bathing waters which are tested in accordance with the EU Bathing Water Regulations. Clare County Council is responsible for managing and maintaining all our water amenity locations county-wide.

F0309 - Gardening

The Gardening Section will continue to enhance public spaces with planting that compliments the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan. In addition, we will continue to develop ways of supporting and empowering local communities in their efforts to enhance their local areas in 2026.

F04 - Community Sport and Recreational Development

Clare Local Area Grants Scheme 2026

Budget 2026 provides for the same level of investment support to our communities, recognising the invaluable work and contribution they provide to their local areas. This scheme has proven very popular with community and voluntary groups, with 498 groups across the county benefiting under the scheme in 2025. It is an all-encompassing scheme which provides for economic, social, environmental and cultural initiatives to support communities, particularly in their continued efforts to manage, operate and maintain community facilities. Beyond supporting community-driven projects, the scheme also offers financial support to artists and organisations that inspire public interest, promote knowledge, appreciation and practice of the Arts, or aim to elevate artistic standards.

The 2025 Scheme provided grant support across 12 grant categories including:

- Public Realm Initiatives and Amenity Projects

- Maintenance of Open Spaces in Private Housing Developments
- Burial Ground Maintenance, Boundary Repair & Provision
- Irish Language
- Christmas Lighting
- Maintenance & Upkeep for Local Authority Estates
- Tourism Promotion
- Sustainable Tourism
- Community Playground
- Support for the Arts
- Community Project Development
- Age-Friendly initiatives

It is envisaged that the new Local Area Grants Scheme for 2026 will be brought to Members in December 2025 for their consideration and approval.

Public Participation Network

The Council continues to work closely with the Clare Public Participation Network (PPN). The PPN is a collective of environmental, social inclusion, community and voluntary organisations in County Clare. The network is jointly funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Clare County Council, recognising the benefit that PPNs bring to communities and Local Government, ensuring that the voices and concerns of our residents are heard and addressed, and to support communities to input into the decision-making functions of the Council.

F05 - Operation of Arts Programme

The Council's Arts Office leads the development of the arts locally to provide open and accessible opportunities for all, offer strategic supports to artists and to foster a continued appreciation and development of the arts.

The new County Arts Development Plan lays the groundwork for arts development countywide in advance of the 2027 Arts Council Framework of Understanding.

Súil Gallery in Ennis will programme 8 exhibitions accompanied by outreach and education events. Over 30 exhibitions will

take place in the Foyer of the County Museum in Ennis, Scarriff Gallery at the Area Offices and Cultúrlann Sweeney, Kilkee. We will continue to support exhibitions at the Ennistymon Courthouse Gallery and the Burren College of Art.

Partnerships with Music Generation Clare will continue as well as with regional and national stakeholders promoting Clare as a film production destination.

A contribution to the University of Limerick Concert Hall is also provided for as is support for arts programmes and projects and festivals.

Supported by the Arts Council, a programme of countywide arts events and projects will continue such as the Artist in Schools Scheme, Arts and Disability Programme, Riches of Clare concert series and Clare Youth Theatre. The Creative Places Shannon Project will begin. We will continue to provide artist studios in Tulla and Ennis and start developing new studios in The Cloister, Ennis. The management of the Cultúrlann Sweeney Theatre facility in Kilkee will continue.

As ever, the Arts Office will continue to strive to include marginalised individuals and communities as far as possible through these activities. We will continue to support individual artists across all art forms and assist festivals to reach their full potential for the benefit of local communities and to generate economic activity in the county.

glór will continue to play a leading role in enhancing Clare's cultural life through a vibrant, year-round programme of music, theatre, dance, visual arts and community engagement. In 2026, it will continue to support artists across all art forms, foster creative participation for people of all ages and backgrounds and deliver on strategic priorities of creativity, community and capacity. Council subsidy will enable glór to sustain high quality programming, strengthen local partnerships and leverage external funding to maximise impact and value for the county.

F0503 - Museum Operations

Clare Museum continues its event programme in 2026 with lectures contributing to the night-time economy and children's events. The Education Officer has broadened outreach activities and visitor numbers continue to rise. The maintenance of the Museum Standards Programme for Ireland (MSPI) continues as does promotion and marketing as the Museum maintains its status as one of main tourist attractions in Ennis.

Sub-Service Description – Division F

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
F01	Leisure Facilities Operations	
F0101	Leisure Facilities Operations	Costs associated with leisure facilities operated by Clare County Council.
F0103	Contribution to External Bodies Leisure Facilities	Contribution to external bodies leisure facilities.
F02	Operation of Library & Archival Service	
F0201	Library Service Operations	Delivery of library services including events programme & IT, maintenance & administration of library buildings.
F0202	Archive Service	Costs associated with archive maintenance and management.
F0204	Purchase of Books, CDs, etc.	Book stock for all branches includes books, multimedia material, periodicals & e-books.
F0205	Contributions to Library Organisations	Contributions to organisations – Local Government Management Agency.
F03	Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations	
F0301	Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	Maintenance & management of the county's parks & grass cutting including parks, pitches, road verges & housing estates.
F0302	Playgrounds	Maintenance & provision of playgrounds.
F0303	Beaches	Maintenance of the county's beaches.
F04	Community Sport & Recreational Development	
F0401	Community Grants	Includes Clare Local Area Grants Scheme. Contribution to Public Participation Network.
F05	Operation of Arts Programme	
F0501	Administration of the Arts Programme	Administration of Arts Programme.
F0502	Contributions to other Bodies Arts Programmes	Contributions to other bodies Arts Programmes.
F0503	Museum Operations	Costs associated with museum operations.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division F - Recreation and Amenity				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
F0101 Leisure Facilities Operations	1,482,212	1,482,212	1,366,650	1,384,650
F0103 Contribution to External Bodies Leisure Facilities	585,140	585,140	576,500	576,500
F0199 Service Support Costs	395,357	395,357	363,098	360,667
F01 Leisure Facilities Operations	2,462,709	2,462,709	2,306,248	2,321,817
F0201 Library Service Operations	4,559,404	4,559,404	4,225,905	4,424,305
F0202 Archive Service	257,412	257,412	316,423	273,438
F0204 Purchase of Books, CD's etc.	322,000	322,000	312,000	312,000
F0205 Contributions to Library Organisations	17,000	17,000	17,000	17,000
F0299 Service Support Costs	1,622,177	1,622,177	1,498,120	1,486,033
F02 Operation of Library and Archival Service	6,777,993	6,777,993	6,369,448	6,512,776
F0301 Parks, Pitches & Open Spaces	1,755,638	1,755,638	1,759,541	1,772,041
F0302 Playgrounds	142,000	142,000	127,000	127,000
F0303 Beaches	734,944	734,944	635,689	623,389
F0399 Service Support Costs	837,416	837,416	813,060	810,336
F03 Outdoor Leisure Areas Operations	3,469,998	3,469,998	3,335,290	3,332,766
F0401 Community Grants	470,040	470,040	436,000	436,000
F0499 Service Support Costs	23,889	23,889	22,259	22,225
F04 Community Sport and Recreational Development	493,929	493,929	458,259	458,225
F0501 Administration of the Arts Programme	1,236,251	1,236,251	1,117,695	1,126,295
F0502 Contributions to other Bodies Arts Programme	155,000	155,000	148,000	148,000
F0503 Museums Operations	436,325	436,325	427,841	434,841
F0599 Service Support Costs	194,267	194,267	178,425	176,257
F05 Operation of Arts Programme	2,021,843	2,021,843	1,871,961	1,885,393
Division F Total	15,226,472	15,226,472	14,341,206	14,510,977

Table F - Income				
Division F - Recreation and Amenity				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Culture, Communications, & Sport	220,540	220,540	206,000	220,540
Arts Council	96,000	96,000	76,800	76,800
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	316,540	316,540	282,800	297,340
Goods & Services				
Recreation/Amenity/Culture	1,106,000	1,106,000	956,000	976,000
Superannuation	147,540	147,540	147,540	147,540
Other income	189,704	189,704	189,704	189,704
Total Goods & Services	1,443,244	1,443,244	1,293,244	1,313,244
Division F Total	1,759,784	1,759,784	1,576,044	1,610,584

An aerial photograph of a coastal town and harbor, featuring a marina with numerous sailboats, residential buildings, and a large body of water in the background. The image is framed by a circular graphic composed of multiple concentric, slightly offset lines, creating a tunnel-like effect. The entire composition is set against a solid red background.

DIVISION G

Summary

Division G includes the operation of harbours and piers, and control of dogs and horses.

G02 - Operation and Maintenance of Piers and Harbours

The Council is responsible for the maintenance and management of Kilrush, Doolin and Liscannor piers and adjacent car parks. This involves working with an extensive array of internal and external stakeholders.

Doolin remains the primary departure point for visitors to the Aran Islands. Activities at the harbour are supervised by 1 permanent Harbour Controller and 1 seasonal Harbour Controller.

G04 - Veterinary Service

Midland Animal Care Ltd are the service providers for the Dog Warden Service and management of the dog shelter in Ennis. The contractor carries out the Council's statutory functions in this area and works with charitable organisations in the rehoming of dogs. Additional dog control patrols are carried out by the Dog Warden during the summer season. A programme of dog license checks is ongoing throughout the county.

Four Seasons Promotions Ltd, t/a ACS have been awarded the contract for the provision of services relating to the control of stray, abandoned and unidentified horses within the county. The Environment Section will arrange to seize any horses on public lands which are declared stray or causing a nuisance by An Garda Síochána.

Provision of veterinary services by Clare County Council on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) was to transition. However, this is still in progress and Clare County Council has not made a provision in the 2026 budget for this service.

Sub-Service Description – Division G

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
G04	Veterinary Service	
G0401	Provision of Veterinary Service	Cost associated with veterinary services. Transition of this service to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is currently in progress.
G0402	Inspection of abattoirs, etc	Cost associated with inspection services. Transition of this service to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine is currently in progress.
G0404	Operation of Dog Warden Service	Income from dog licences and fines and provision of Dog Warden Service which is operated on a contract basis.
G0405	Other Animal Welfare Services (incl. horse control)	Costs associated with removal of horses.
G05	Educational Support Services	
G0506	Other Educational Services	Statutory contribution.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division G - Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
G0203 Operation of Harbours	-	-	-	-
G0299 Service Support Costs	111,734	111,734	108,683	108,543
G02 Operation and Maintenance of Piers and Harbours	111,734	111,734	108,683	108,543
G0404 Operation of Dog Warden Service	281,527	281,527	233,023	281,023
G0405 Other Animal Welfare Services (incl Horse Control)	50,000	50,000	50,000	50,000
G0499 Service Support Costs	147,272	147,272	136,773	135,880
G04 Veterinary Service	478,799	478,799	419,796	466,903
G0506 Other Educational Services	4,000	4,000	4,000	4,000
G0599 Service Support Costs	28,416	28,416	25,878	25,872
G05 Educational Support Services	32,416	32,416	29,878	29,872
Division G Total	622,949	622,949	558,357	605,318

Table F - Income				
Division G - Agriculture, Education, Health & Welfare				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies Agriculture, Food, Fisheries, & The Marine	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	10,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Goods & Services Superannuation Other income	10,278 112,000	10,278 112,000	10,278 112,000	10,278 112,000
Total Goods & Services	122,278	122,278	122,278	122,278
Division G Total	132,278	132,278	132,278	132,278

DIVISION H



Summary

This Division includes provision for the administration of commercial rates, the Council fleet, Electoral Register and local elections, casual trading and local representation costs.

H01 - Profit/Loss Machinery Account

A Fleet Management Plan for the Machinery Yard has now been completed and is currently being progressed. The objective of this plan is to provide a modern, cost-effective, clean and energy efficient fleet of vehicles to meet Council's operational requirements.

The projected costs associated with the upgrade of fleet will be financed over several years from internally generated income from the Machinery Yard and loan finance if required.

H03 - Administration of Rates

H0301 and H0302 contain the budget for the operation of the Rates Department. The budget lines cover the costs associated with managing commercial rates, which are a key source of income for Local Authorities

Compliance with legislation including updates from the Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019 is also administered within this section.

H0303 includes the budget for the following:

- Vacancy refunds – 2026 budget was reduced by €100k to reflect properties that were vacant and delisted for commercial rates in 2025. In line with Section 9 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act (LGROMA) legislation, it is proposed to continue the tiered approach to vacancy abatement. Further details are set out in the attached report.
- Irrecoverable rates – this budget aligns with 2025 and represents a provision for non-compliant commercial rate customers where outstanding debt is deemed irrecoverable.

- Provision for revaluation appeals - this budget line reflects adjustments arising from appeals lodged with the Valuation Tribunal following the 2023 Revaluation. As these appeals are resolved, the associated risk gradually diminishes in relation to loss of income; however, the process remains slow. Budget 2026 shows a reduction of €400k.

H04 - Franchise Costs - Register of Electors and Local Elections

Clare County Council has responsibility for preparing and maintaining the Register of Electors. Those eligible to vote can register or update their details online at www.checktheregister.ie. The Electoral Act 2022 provides for the modernisation of the electoral registration process. Provisions include having a rolling register, simplified forms and processes, use of PPSNs in the process, pre-registration for 16 and 17-year-olds, arrangements for people with no fixed abode and inclusion of anonymous electors.

The current Register of Electors database (IReg) will be migrated to a national system in Q2 2026. In advance of this, preparatory work is currently ongoing by a project team within the Franchise Section. This team is reviewing the accurateness of the existing data including duplicate records. The Franchise Section is continually updating the rolling Register of Electors with both electronic and paper-based applications.

H05 - Operation of Morgue and Coroner Expenses

The Council has made provision in the budget for the cost of the coroner's service as required by the Coroners Act, 1962. Costs such as salaries of the coroner, fees and expenses incurred from holding postmortems and inquests are included and funded by the Council.

H07 - Operation of Markets and Casual Trading

The Council will continue to administer and manage the operation of markets in designated casual trading areas throughout the county during 2026.

H09 - Local Representation/Civic Leadership

Provision has been made in this area for representative payments to our 28 Members for allowances and administration of Member associations together with the General Municipal Allocations for 2026.

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 and its related regulations set out various matters in relation to Municipal Districts. This includes the General Municipal Allocation (GMA) which is defined as the discretionary funding available to the Municipal District Members for allocation in the budgetary plan. The GMA in Budget 2026 is €1.372m.

H10 - Motor Taxation

The provision within H10 is comprised of salaries, office management and administration associated with the operation of the Motor Tax Department for Clare County Council.

To September 2025, excluding online payments which accounts for 83% of transactions, Clare County Council processed approximately 24,152 transactions with an estimated value of €3.8m. The total cost of operating this service is borne by Clare County Council where the total from Motor Tax receipts is receipts to central exchequer funding.

Sub-Service Description – Division H

Service / Sub-Service		Description of Activities
H01	Profit & Loss Machinery Account	
H0199	Service Support Costs	Operation of the corporate fleet including payroll, vehicle hire & repair, fuel costs & insurance.
H03	Administration of Rates	
H0301	Administration of Rates Office	Admin costs relating to the preparation & issuing of commercial rates demands.
H0302	Debt Management Service Rates	Costs associated with collection of rate accounts.
H0303	Refunds & Irrecoverable Rates	Refund of rates on vacant properties and provision for irrecoverables.
H04	Franchise Costs	
H0401	Register of Elector Costs	Costs associated with the preparation of the Register of Electors.
H0402	Local Election Costs	Local Election costs - money is capitalised over 5 years.
H05	Operation of Morgue & Coroner Expenses	
H0501	Coroner Fees & Expenses	Agency fees For Coroners Service.
H07	Operation of Markets & Casual Trading	
H0702	Casual Trading Areas	Provision for costs associated with management of casual trading areas.
H09	Local Representation & Civic Leadership	
H0901	Representational Payments	Councillors' representational payments.
H0902	Cathaoirleach/Leas Cathaoirleach Allowances	Cathaoirleach/Leas Cathaoirleach allowances & Cathaoirleach's expenses.
H0903	Annual Allowances LA Members	Payment of Councillors' annual allowances.
H0904	Expenses LA Members	Payment of Councillors' conference costs.
H0905	Other Expenses	Payment of statutory committees' expenses and communication expenses.
H0907	Retirement Gratuities	Provision of gratuities to retired members.
H0908	Contribution to Members Associations	Contribution to Association of Irish Local Government (AILG) & Local Authorities Members Association (LAMA).
H0909	General Municipal Allocation	General Municipal Allocation to each Municipal District.
H10	Motor Taxation	
H1001	Motor Taxation Operation	Costs associated with motor tax operations.
H11	Agency & Recoupable Services	
H1101	Agency & Recoupable Service	Miscellaneous income.

Table F - Expenditure				
Division H - Miscellaneous Services				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
H0102 Plant and Machinery Operations	-	-	100,000	-
H0199 Service Support Costs	683,873	683,873	537,392	630,875
H01 Profit & Loss Machinery Account	683,873	683,873	637,392	630,875
H0301 Administration of Rates Office	270,468	270,468	254,929	269,929
H0302 Debt Management Service Rates	636,762	636,762	607,553	607,553
H0303 Refunds and Irrecoverable Rates	5,738,039	5,738,039	6,061,925	5,561,925
H0399 Service Support Costs	714,325	714,325	677,831	677,120
H03 Adminstration of Rates	7,359,594	7,359,594	7,602,238	7,116,527
H0401 Register of Elector Costs	118,875	118,875	38,305	78,305
H0402 Local Election Costs	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
H0499 Service Support Costs	265,739	265,739	243,161	242,988
H04 Franchise Costs	404,614	404,614	301,466	341,293
H0501 Coroner Fees and Expenses	260,346	260,346	238,926	248,926
H0599 Service Support Costs	61,965	61,965	56,764	55,944
H05 Operation of Morgue and Coroner Expenses	322,311	322,311	295,690	304,870
H0702 Casual Trading Areas	40,282	40,282	40,549	40,549
H0799 Service Support Costs	38,456	38,456	36,270	36,234
H07 Operation of Markets and Casual Trading	78,738	78,738	76,819	76,783
H0901 Representational Payments	900,032	900,032	865,134	865,134
H0902 Chair/Vice Chair Allowances	54,000	54,000	54,000	54,000
H0903 Annual Allowances LA Members	263,562	263,562	263,562	263,562
H0904 Expenses LA Members	140,000	140,000	140,000	140,000
H0905 Other Expenses	90,000	90,000	74,000	74,000
H0907 Retirement Gratuities	80,000	80,000	80,000	80,000
H0908 Contribution to Members Associations	29,250	29,250	24,250	24,250
H0909 General Municipal Allocation	1,372,000	1,372,000	1,372,000	1,372,000
H0999 Service Support Costs	827,909	827,909	779,681	776,341
H09 Local Representation & Civic Leadership	3,756,753	3,756,753	3,652,627	3,649,287
H1001 Motor Taxation Operation	565,309	565,309	511,139	551,139
H1099 Service Support Costs	711,658	711,658	671,467	671,333
H10 Motor Taxation	1,276,967	1,276,967	1,182,606	1,222,472
H1101 Agency & Recoupable Service	116,000	116,000	116,000	116,000
H1102 NPPR	-	-	37,188	-
H1199 Service Support Costs	59,163	59,163	54,797	54,083
H11 Agency & Recoupable Services	175,163	175,163	207,985	170,083
Division H Total	14,058,013	14,058,013	13,956,823	13,512,190

Table F - Expenditure				
Division H - Miscellaneous Services				
Expenditure by Service and Sub-Service	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
OVERALL TOTAL	204,221,926	204,221,926	191,927,542	195,783,597

Table F - Income				
Division H - Miscellaneous Services				
Income by Source	2026		2025	
	Adopted by Council €	Estimated by Chief Executive €	Adopted by Council €	Estimated Outturn €
Government Grants & Subsidies				
Housing, Local Government & Heritage	17,865,632	17,865,632	16,135,302	16,175,302
Total Government Grants & Subsidies	17,865,632	17,865,632	16,135,302	16,175,302
Goods & Services				
Superannuation	113,638	113,638	113,638	113,638
Other income	526,905	526,905	526,905	526,905
Total Goods & Services	640,543	640,543	640,543	640,543
Division H Total	18,506,175	18,506,175	16,775,845	16,815,845
OVERALL TOTAL	141,731,822	141,731,822	133,922,730	137,929,691

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APPENDIX I

CENTRAL MANAGEMENT CHARGES

Appendix 1 - Central Management Charges

Service support costs are included within each Division. These are the central management charges that are spread across each service. These costs include Corporate Services, Corporate Facilities, Information Communication Technology (ICT), People & Culture, Finance and Other.

Corporate Services

The functions of the Corporate Services and Governance Department include:

- Secretariat to Chief Executive
- Ethics & strengthening governance
- Meetings administration
- Managing civic events & enhancing the Council's civic presence
- Communications
- Irish language compliance & promotion
- Business innovation
- Records management
- Freedom of Information requests
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Facilities Management Corporate Buildings

Corporate Services includes the costs of civic events, communications and public relations, record management, data protection, Freedom of Information and Irish language promotion and compliance. It is a central area of support across all Directorates.

Corporate Buildings

The maintenance of the corporate buildings in Ennis is organised by the Facilities Management Team. Budget 2026 provides for the caretaking, cleaning and maintenance of Áras Contae an Chláir, Waterpark Campus, Waterpark House and DeValera Library, Ennis.

Information Communication Technology (ICT)

The ICT Department's priorities for 2026 are closely aligned with the National Local Government Digital Strategy, focusing on the efficient digitization of services with the objective of achieving 90% digital service delivery by 2030.

Key initiatives include expanding digital offerings to the public, enabling streamlined access to Clare County Council services. These programs are being advanced through a combination of locally delivered system development and nationally supported IT projects, ensuring that the solutions are accessible, secure scalable and aligned with broader digital strategy objectives. In parallel, upskilling staff with essential digital competencies remains a priority to ensure optimal service delivery and system adoption, with staff training initiatives supported at both local and national levels.

Information, security and privacy are fundamental to all ICT projects. The Department is also dedicated to sustainable innovation by implementing digital solutions that reduce paper usage and travel needs, supporting both operational and efficiency and climate goals.

Serving citizens, directorates, departments, business units and elected members, the ICT Department collaborates with business units and the Innovation Team to ensure digital solutions are easy to use, reliable, accessible and secure. These initiatives are delivered through both national IT projects and local system transformation programmes.

Having made significant advancements in recent years, the Department's 2026 focus is on broadening public digital access, automating internal workflows and reinforcing staff training, all while maintaining alignment with national digital strategy and sustainability objectives.

People and Culture

The People and Culture Department supports all Departments in planning and delivering the Council's workforce requirements in a manner that is appropriate for the delivery of corporate strategic goals and objectives in accordance with the Council's Strategic Workforce Plan.

The department has responsibility for creating a culture of continuous learning and development, building leadership competencies and developing a framework of policy, procedures and practices that underpin and support effective people management. The department works to maintain a fair, supportive and healthy work environment through its' staff well-being service and employee assistance programme.

Finance Department

The Finance Department provides a wide range of financial services to the Elected Members, suppliers, management and staff across all Divisions of the Council including:

- Preparation of the annual revenue budget
- Preparation of Report on the 3-year Capital Programme
- Tax Compliance
- Preparation of Annual Financial Statements
- Administration of Commercial Rates
- Financial control, cash flow and treasury management
- Administration of Agresso (financial management system)
- Processing of payments to suppliers
- Co-ordination of payroll administration with national payroll shared service centre
- Procurement
- Administration of Department-directed grants.

Pensions and Gratuities

A total provision has been made in the 2026 budget to cover both pension payments and lump sum payments payable on retirement.

Area Offices

Budget 2026 provides for the costs of area office staff and administration at 5 locations in the county.

Print Room

The budget in this area provides for the ongoing operation of the print room to meet corporate needs. It also includes a printing operating budget for each Directorate.

APPENDIX 1	
SUMMARY OF CENTRAL MANAGEMENT CHARGES FOR YEAR 2026	
Description	2026 €
Area Office Overhead	3,177,284
Corporate Affairs Overhead	3,556,303
Corporate Buildings Overhead	3,142,817
Finance Function Overhead	1,421,041
Human Resource Function Overhead	3,211,701
IT Services	3,341,954
Print/Post Room Service Overhead Allocation	770,140
Pension & Lump Sum Overhead	11,596,529
Total Expenditure Allocated to Services	30,217,769

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APPENDIX II

LOCAL PROPERTY TAX

APPENDIX 2		
SUMMARY OF LOCAL PROPERTY TAX ALLOCATION FOR YEAR 2026		
Description	2026 €	2026 €
Discretionary		
** Discretionary Local Property Tax (Table A)	<u>12,493,043</u>	12,493,043
Self Funding - Revenue Budget		
Housing & Building	-	
Roads, Transport & Safety	<u>-</u>	
Total Local Property Tax - Revenue Budget		<u>12,493,043</u>
Self Funding - Capital Budget		
Housing & Building	-	
Roads, Transport & Safety	<u>-</u>	
Total Local Property Tax - Capital Budget		<u>-</u>
Total Local Property Tax Allocation (Post Variation)		12,493,043

**This amount includes an equalisation contribution of €0 from the Exchequer/Local Government Fund.



Report on Abatement of Rates in respect of Vacant Properties

Local Government Abatement of Rates in respect of Vacant Properties

Section 9 of the Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019, as amended by the Historic and Archaeological Heritage & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023, provides for the abatement of rates in respect of vacant properties. The approval of a scheme under this legislation is a reserved function of the Elected Members.

The enactment of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 provided for new rates vacancy abatement (Section 9) on vacant commercial premises, to be decided by Local Authority Members in order to promote national and/or local policy objectives. New regulations in relation to this section came into operation from 10th July 2024. These new provisions will add to the suite of options already available to Local Authorities to support local businesses and ratepayers. It is important to note that legal provision to provide refunds of rates for commercial properties has existed since 1946. Clare County Council had historically a 100% refund rate or vacancy credit on vacant properties subject to satisfying the criteria each year until 2020. For Budgets 2021-2024, this Council adopted a 25% vacancy credit with a corresponding Vacancy Grant Relief based on a tiered structure on vacant commercial properties to promote re-occupation or conversion to domestic of these units.

The purpose of the updated legislation is so that existing policy objectives can continue within the legal structure of the newly commenced Section 9 and these associated Regulations. For example, some Local Authorities (particularly in urban areas) have in recent years incrementally decreased the rates refund on vacant property in order to encourage re-use/dis-incentivise vacancy. Local Authorities in other areas such as the western seaboard, have continued to offer 100% refunds on vacant property in recognition of difficulty in some instances of finding suitable tenants for those properties.

Qualifying conditions for commercial properties

To qualify for vacancy abatement, the premises must be unoccupied and vacant for one of the following reasons:

- (a) for the purpose of the execution of additions, alterations (including demolition or redevelopment) or repairs thereon, or
- (b) because the liable person is *bona fide* unable to obtain a suitable tenant at a reasonable rent therefore.

The ratepayer is required to complete the application form and forward proof that they meet the criteria including a signed and witnessed Statutory Declaration.

Public Consultation

S.I. No. 349 of 2024 dated 10th July 2024 gave effect to the Local Government Abatement of Rates in respect of Vacant Properties Regulation 2024. Included in these Regulations is a requirement that a Local Authority must consult with the public in its administrative area in relation to its consideration of making or amending an existing abatement scheme. An advert in the prescribed format was published on 3rd October 2025, inviting submissions from the public. The latest date for receiving submissions was 17th October.

Clare County Council received one submission. This submission related to a planning issue as opposed to a vacancy abatement.

Levels of vacancy:

It is estimated that approximately 13.5% (560) of commercial properties are vacant across the county with a commercial rates valuation in 2025 of €1.95m. 70% of the vacant properties have an annual commercial valuation of less than €3,000.

To continue the policy to incentivise the occupancy of vacant properties for either commercial or residential use, it is recommended that the Vacancy Abatement Rate is aligned and adopted in line with the existing tiered scheme as outlined in the table below:

Rates liability	Adopted Scheme	Proposed Scheme
	2025	2026
	<i>Vacancy Abatement Relief</i>	<i>Vacancy Abatement Relief</i>
Properties less than €20k	100%	100%
Properties €20k - €50k	75%	75%
Properties €50k - €100k	50%	50%
Properties greater than €100k	25%	25%

It is estimated that such a recommendation will not generate any additional income or cost to this Council. It is also recommended that the use of this legislation and the adoption of a scheme specific to our towns or areas within our town and villages to achieve the purpose of this legislation requires further analysis and consideration. This legislation can be an enabler of our objectives for housing activation and can be taken together with derelict sites legislation to stimulate housing.

Members have approved this scheme for Budget 2026 under Section 9 of the Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019, as amended by the Historic and Archaeological Heritage & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

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Report on Waiver Scheme for Commercial Rates

Local Government Waiver of Commercial Rates Scheme

Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act (LGROMA) 2019 provides that a Local Authority may make a scheme providing for the waiver of rates to support the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy, a development plan or a local area plan within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act 2000 and a local economic and community plan within the meaning of the Local Government Act 2001. This was enacted under S.I. No. 349 of 2024, “Local Government Waiver of Rates Regulations 2024”.

Under the legislation a Local Authority cannot make a waiver scheme or amend an existing scheme unless it is proposed to the Authority by a Strategic Policy Committee (SPC) and any such proposal for the financial year 2026 must be made before 30th June 2025. The Economic SPC agreed this proposal on 24th June 2025. Approval of a scheme under this legislation is a reserved function of the Elected Members.

Qualifying conditions for commercial properties

The Economic SPC propose a reduction in commercial rates over a three-year period on a countywide basis for the following commercially rated premises established from 2026 onwards:

- New build hotels and hostels, or redevelopment of vacant units for hospitality purposes (hotels or hostels). In the case of redevelopment of units, they must be vacant for a minimum of 5 years prior to the submission of the planning application to qualify.
- New build recreational vehicle campervan sites
- New build nursing homes, or redevelopment of vacant units for nursing home purposes
- New build creches providing private childcare (outside of the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme).
- Ground floor commercially rated premises where upper floors are converted from 2026 onwards to provide new residential accommodation for owner occupation or long-term letting. In the case of long-term letting, the tenancy must be registered with the Residential Tenancies Board (RTB).

The SPC proposed a separate waiver scale where the new commercial units and/or residential units as outlined above are developed on a site/premises that is recorded on the derelict sites register. If qualifying for the rates waiver on the derelict sites scale, the owner must demonstrate that the derelict sites levy, if billed, has been fully discharged to the Local Authority.

The proposed waiver applicable is set out below:

Year	% Rates Waiver	% Rates Waiver (where derelict site developed)
1	75%	85%
2	50%	60%
3	25%	35%

To be eligible for the rates waiver in any given year, applicants must discharge their full commercial rates liability before year end (ie. 31st December each year).

Public Consultation

Included in these Regulations is a requirement that a Local Authority must consult with the public in its administrative area in relation to its consideration of making or amending an existing rates waiver scheme. An advert in the prescribed format was published on 4th July 2025, inviting submissions from the public. The latest date for receiving submissions was the 21st July 2025. Clare County Council received no submissions.

Financial Considerations

The proposal from the Economic SPC is focused on providing an economic benefit with minimal costs to the Council. The only element which will result in a loss of rates is ground floor commercially rated premises where upper floors are converted from 2026 onwards to provide new residential accommodation for owner occupation or long-term letting.

Members have approved this scheme for Budget 2026 under Section 15 of the Local Government Rates & Other Matters Act 2019, as amended by the Historic and Archaeological Heritage & Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2023.

The background of the slide is a dark blue gradient. Overlaid on this are several decorative, swirling lines in a light green color. These lines form a large, irregular circular frame in the center of the slide. Inside this frame is an aerial photograph of a bridge spanning a river. The bridge has a white concrete deck and blue structural elements. The river is dark blue, and the surrounding landscape includes green trees and some buildings on the banks.

Report on Capital Expenditure 2026-2028

Section 135 Local Government Act – 3-year Capital Programme

This report outlines Clare County Council's proposed capital programme and long-term strategic objectives in capital expenditure for the period 2026-2028. The proposed projects outlined in this report would see planned investment of €437.3m across all Directorates of the Council in the 2026-2028 period. It is important to note that consideration of the capital programme by the Members does not confer Council approval on any individual project. This can only be done through the normal statutory processes and compliance with the Infrastructure Guidelines (formerly Public Spending Code). Funding arrangements also need to be clearly identified and secured in advance of committing to any project. The capital programme is a rolling programme which is revised annually; time and other constraints may vary the progress of projects within a given period. The table below outlines the planned projected expenditure by Directorate during the period 2026-2028. **Note that funding to be identified for projects to progress is €78.76m.**

Capital Programme 2026-2028				
Directorate	Forecasted Capital Expenditure			
	2026 €'000	2027 €'000	2028 €'000	Total €'000
Finance, Investment & Enterprise	2,260	12,780	12,310	27,350
Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision & Land Activation	80,220	112,430	96,069	288,719
Planning, Economic, Rural & Community Development	18,250	8,370	2,620	29,240
Tourism, Festivals, Libraries & Cultural Services	20,761	16,614	3,997	41,371
Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services	18,075	13,600	18,910	50,585
	139,565	163,794	133,905	437,265
Forecasted Income				
Grant Income				€315,394
Development Contributions				€2,112
Loan Funding				€19,244
Other				€21,756
				€358,507
Funding to be identified for Projects to Progress				€78,758

Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision & Land Activation Directorate (€288.7m 2026-2028 - €14.4m funding to be identified)

The Housing Delivery, Infrastructure Provision & Land Activation Directorate has planned capital expenditure of €288.7m in the three-year period 2026-2028. €139.1m of this projected spend is on house purchase and construction across 22 schemes. A primary focus of the Directorate for 2026-2028 will be progressing a wide number of capital projects, subject to funding. On 13th November 2025, the Government published its new housing strategy - *'Delivering Homes, Building Communities: An Action Plan on Housing Supply and Targeting Homelessness'*, which aims to deliver 300,000 new homes nationwide by the end of 2030. Clare County Council will be guided by this plan over the 2026-2028 period. In 2025 alone, Clare County Council and the AHB sector projects delivery of 190 new social housing units across the various streams of delivery. The SHCEP (Social Housing Current Expenditure Programme) and CAS (Capital Assistance Scheme) funding for delivery of social housing by Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies respectively is fully recouped from the Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage (DHLGH). The Directorate, which now incorporates infrastructure provision and land activation, will engage with key stakeholders to activate all forms of housing provision including private housing and will address dereliction in towns with a view to bringing units back into occupancy. Staff will work closely with the Government's Housing Activation Office, Infrastructure Division and key utility companies to unlock housing opportunities.

Housing Activation and Delivery

Land Purchase

Land availability continues to be a critical factor in ensuring a healthy pipeline for delivery is maintained, so to that end, a provision of €4.5m is included in the projected spend over the next 3 years. The land cost for social housing delivery is fully recoupable from the DHLGH.

House Acquisitions

The Department have advised of limited scope for house acquisitions for the foreseeable future due to the commitment to deliver homes through build programmes under 'Housing for All'. The result of this cap is that there will be limited activity during 2026 confined to purchasing units to deliver on Housing First requirements, acquiring properties to facilitate persons to prevent or exit homelessness, tenant in situ cases and purchase of specific housing for the elderly and people with a disability. Limited funding is also available under the Capital Assistance Scheme (CAS) for Approved Housing Bodies to purchase properties for vulnerable housing applicants. The anticipated spend for house acquisition is €4m in 2026 for delivery by the Council and the Approved Housing Bodies sector.

Affordable Housing

Initially, Clare was not identified by the DHLGH as having an affordability constraint on a full county approach. However, work undertaken by the Housing Department of Clare County Council early in 2023 to conduct a housing market analysis for the 2 large urban centres of Ennis and Shannon made a convincing case for the extension of the Affordable Purchase Scheme to eligible schemes in these towns. With an approval in principle now in place, the Housing Department have and continue to submit individual affordable applications to the DHLGH regarding various developments from around the county. Under the Ready to Build Scheme it is this Council's intent

to make serviced sites available in our towns and villages at a discount of the market value to potential individual purchasers (self-builders).

Turnkey Construction

Turnkey acquisition continues to be an important delivery stream under the programme “Housing for All”. For 2026, the overall budgeted spend on direct turnkey projects is €11.2m relating to 34 proposed social housing units. The funding of turnkey construction projects is fully recouped from the DHLGH.

Housing Construction

2026 will be another year of significant delivery of social housing by Clare County Council with 131 units currently planned for delivery with several other projects planned to be at various stages of design. The projected capital spend for 2026 regarding these units is €18.9m. Currently, Clare County Council continues to progress with Department approved direct build housing construction projects which will provide for proposed delivery beyond 2026.

Returning Vacant Stock to Productive Use (Void Funding)

It is anticipated that the spend on returning vacant stock to use in 2026 will be circa €2.56m on 80 no. properties with approximately a third of this cost recouped from the DHLGH. The Council continues to address circa. 80 vacant/void properties annually and a dedicated funding mechanism to provide for the timely return of these vacant units is an annual challenge for this Council, with an approx. €2m shortfall on an annual basis. This shortfall is funded from the annual revenue budget.

Planned Maintenance

Drawdown on the approved loan of €10m to deliver a planned maintenance programme for Clare County Council is currently at €7m. During 2026, it is anticipated that a further €1m will be drawn down as the project continues.

Energy Efficiency

Expenditure under this programme in 2026-2028 is anticipated to be in the region of €8.7m which is largely recouped from the DHLGH. This includes additional expenditure for 30 no. completions under our Climate Action Plan subject to Department approval.

Defective Concrete Blocks Grant

Clare County Council gained access to the Enhanced Defective Concrete Blocks Scheme for private dwellings in July 2023 with the finalised Act and Regulations published. Clare County Council’s main role is the administration of the scheme. The Council has received 169 applications since the commencement of the scheme and have issued 61 remediation grant amounts to various homeowners as directed by the Housing Agency. The projected spend for the scheme for 2026 is €11.3m. Clare County Council await details from the DHLGH for the launch of the Local Authority Defective Concrete Block Scheme which will then allow Local Authority housing stock affected by deleterious materials to be remediated.

Capital Infrastructure Delivery

Capital Infrastructure Delivery oversees a diverse and substantial portfolio of infrastructure projects, with several key initiatives advancing between 2026-2028. These include the completion of the Ennis Public Realm enhancement, the N19 Shannon Airport Access Road upgrade, the Claureen Link Road (LIHAF), the West Clare Railway Greenway, the Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme, the Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme and the Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing at Blake's Corner. The majority of these projects are primarily funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), the National Transport Authority and/or the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Claureen Link Road - Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF)

The Council remains firmly committed to delivering the infrastructure necessary to unlock lands for housing development in Claureen. While discussions are ongoing regarding the acquisition of the final land parcel required for the project, all other parcels have either been acquired or have agreed terms in place. This includes the site designated for the initial phase of development, where approximately 225 housing units are planned. With a contractor procured, it is envisaged that construction will commence on site early 2026. There will be ongoing engagement with the National Housing Activation Office to ensure adequate funding is in place.

Doolin Pier

Following a cross-Directorate review in 2024, immediate priorities have been identified as access and parking. The West Clare Municipal District is currently advancing footpath access from Fisher Street to the pier, with completion expected within the next year. The requirements for the proposed Visitor Services building are under active review, and the Council will shortly submit a proposal to the Department outlining options to progress the project.

Ennis Public Realm Regeneration (Phase B)

Following the approval of funding under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) in July 2023, the Ennis Public Realm Regeneration Project is set to transform key streetscapes including High Street, Bank Place, O'Connell Street, and Old Barrack Street. Enhancements to O'Connell Square and Barrack Square will further elevate their amenity value and support their use as vibrant civic spaces. To meet the match-funding requirement, loan funding has been allocated in the revenue budget. The project aims to improve pedestrian accessibility and deliver expanded, high-quality public spaces, ultimately enhancing the town centre experience for both retail and social activities. Construction began in October 2023 and is on track for substantial completion by December 2025. Significant progress has already been made, with long sections of the streets completed in line with the Shared Surface Model. Additionally, Uisce Éireann has contributed €2.5m towards the refurbishment of water mains and foul sewers in the town centre, representing a major investment in essential infrastructure and ensuring long-term reliability.

Ennistymon Inner Relief Road and Bridge Crossing (Blake's Corner)

Pending the finalisation of the third-party legal challenge to An Coimisiún Pleanála's decision to confirm the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), Clare County Council will advance to finalise the detailed design, initiate the tendering process and appoint a contractor to deliver this critical and long-anticipated piece of infrastructure.

Killaloe Bypass/Shannon Bridge Crossing

On the 22nd of May 2025, the Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien, officially opened the transformative Killaloe Bypass/Shannon Bridge Crossing and R494 Improvement Scheme.

The project comprises of:

- 2km of new single carriageway bypass around the town of Killaloe which connects the R463 to the north of the town with the Brian Ború Bridge section and R494 to the south of the town
- a new single carriageway bridge, named in honour of Brian Ború, crossing over the River Shannon approximately 1km south of the existing Killaloe Bridge and connecting the Killaloe bypass with the R494
- the upgrade and realignment of approximately 3.3 kilometres of the existing R494 from its junction with the R496 and Brian Ború Bridge south of Ballina, as far as the junction with the R445 (previously known as N7) north of Birdhill, and the M7 link road
- provision of dedicated, high quality new cycling and pedestrian facilities along the approximately 6.2km length of road development

The scheme will serve to greatly improve the quality of life for residents of both towns. The alternative route will take through-traffic and HGVs out of both town centres, thereby significantly reducing congestion, protecting both heritage areas and providing a much-needed boost to the local economy and the region's tourism sector. Final snagging, landscaping, commercial agreement and project close out will proceed into 2026.

Kilkee Flood Relief Scheme

Following receipt of approval with conditions by An Coimisiún Pleanála in August 2025, the Judicial Review moratorium period concluded on 17th October 2025. Gap analysis for Stage III surveys has commenced. Works are also continuing on the various land acquisitions required as part of the scheme. The scheme is 100% funded by the Office of Public Works (OPW).

N19 Shannon Airport Access Road

Following TII approval, the Development Consent Application will be made to An Coimisiún Pleanála for this critical infrastructural project in Q4 2025 with an oral hearing likely to follow. Phase 5 (Enabling and Procurement) & Phase 6 (Construction) will progress thereafter which are subject to timely consents, no legal challenge, funding, etc. The construction contract is estimated to be in the region of 18 months in duration. Further information and associated literature on the project can be accessed via the scheme website www.shannonaccess.ie.

Remediation of sites containing Asbestos Containing Material (ACM)

Planning documents are being prepared in respect of submission of a Part VIII submission for the remediation of the subject sites. The sites continue to be routinely monitored/maintained as required by the Council in accordance with the approach as agreed with the Environmental Protection Agency.

Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme

Further to the identification of the Emerging Preferred Options for Fluvial (River) and coastal defences, the scheme consultant has commenced a value engineering exercise as requested by the Office of Public Works. Once the final options and defences are agreed, the scheme will progress to planning which is anticipated to be in 2026. The scheme is 100% funded.

West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 1: Kilrush to Kilkee)

In line with the 'Code of Best Practice for National and Regional Greenways', all 3 non-statutory public consultations have been successfully completed, covering the Study Area, Route Options and the Emerging Preferred Corridor. Preparation of the Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR), Natura Impact Statement (NIS) and land acquisition documentation is underway, and it is planned on submitting a planning application to An Coimisiún Pleanála in early 2026.

West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 2: Ennis to Ennistymon)

Works continue on developing the 'Options Selection Report'. Once complete, it will be sent to TII for peer review. Following this, a preferred route corridor will be published and will undergo public consultation in 2026.

West Clare Railway Greenway (Section 3 & 4: Ennistymon to Miltown Malbay and Miltown Malbay to Moyasta)

Limited progress was made on these sections in 2025 due to the absence of allocated funding from TII. However, there are plans to reactivate parts of the project in 2026, contingent on funding availability.

Other Greenway Proposals

Waterways Ireland are advancing a proposed greenway from Scarriff to Limerick which will be delivered in smaller sections. The project is currently at 'Route Options Selection' Phase and is being funded by Transport Infrastructure Ireland.

Land Activation, Derelict Sites and Property

Property and Land Activation

Much work is being done in assessing the potential for economic use of various property assets in the ownership of Clare County Council. Following initial surveys, options for use will be considered, plans for design done and planning approval sought, subject to funding being available. As projects are identified, the funding and value for money aspects of the individual proposals are examined. Refurbishment and upgrading of Bellevue House in Ennis, the former Library Headquarters building, has recently been completed.

Derelict Sites

The Council will continue the significant work programme of taking action on dereliction across County Clare and in particular, the advancement of the compulsory acquisition process where there is no engagement with owners. For properties that are acquired by Clare County Council, the option of refurbishment and re-use by the Council will be considered, particularly if suitable for housing, and some properties will be offered for sale on the open market, subject to conditions

and approval by the Elected Members. There will be a multi-strand approach including working closely with other Departments within the Council. We will continue to meet regularly with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in relation to the URDF Call 3 Fund for this programme in relation to the town of Ennis.

Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services Directorate (€50.6m 2026-2028 - €16.3 funding to be identified)

There is significant capital expenditure planned for 2026-2028 in the Transportation, Climate Action, Recreation, Environmental & Emergency Services Directorate. A significant portion of the planned €50.6m expenditure is recouped from the relevant Government Departments. A primary focus of the Directorate for 2026-2028 will be progressing a wide number of capital projects, subject to funding. Key projects include:

Transportation and Mobility

Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project (PLEEP)

The key priorities in relation to public lighting include complete changeover to LED technology and replacement of supporting infrastructure where required. This project is continuing with the survey of public lights in Clare nearing completion. Works on the replacement of the light heads will continue during 2026. It is clear that the initial regional business case for this project, which relied on a self-financing model due to energy savings, has now been undermined by the continued increase in energy costs. There has also been an element of de-scoping of works and issues regarding concentric cabling.

Beechpark Machinery Yard works

The facility at Beechpark requires a capital investment of approx. €4.3m to address long-term maintenance and identified defects at the facility. This investment and necessary upgrade works will preserve our investment in the Machinery Yard going forward. Budget 2026 provides for loan funding for Phase 1 of this project.

Electric Vehicles (EVs)

Clare County Council's emissions profile across transport includes for diesel consumed in internal combustion engines. An objective of the Council in 2026 will be to identify further service areas where light goods vehicles can be utilised in lieu of existing diesel vans. A number of electric vehicles have been purchased by the Council in 2024 - 6 EV pick-up trucks are under order and 2 EV vans are going through the procurement process currently. Procurement of EVs will continue into 2026-2028 as we continue to move more toward electrification.

Active Travel

The active travel programme is developing sustainable and active travel projects including those identified in the NTA Cycle Connects and Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy in conjunction with the National Transport Authority. These projects include the R352 Tulla Road Cycling Scheme (under construction), the R458 Clarecastle to Ennis (Limerick Rd) Cycling Scheme and R463 Ardnacrusha to Athlunkard Cycling Scheme. The programmes also designs and delivers Safe Routes to Schools programmes.

Climate Action, Environment and Water Services

Clare County Council has produced their Climate Action Plan which sets out the objective and actions to achieve our emission reduction and energy efficiency targets by 2030. The principal capital projects to support the attainment of these objectives during 2026-2028 are below. Clare County Council does not have responsibility for the delivery of municipal water and wastewater services in Clare but does retain responsibility for the Rural Water Programme.

Buildings Retrofit Project

A 51% emissions reduction target is mandated to all Local Authorities. Clare County Council emissions are divided into 3 specific areas - electricity, thermal and transport. The reduction of emissions across the thermal section will involve the retrofitting of buildings with new green technologies as well as improving our assets fabric thermal performance. This will be a multi-year objective. The Council, through the proposed Mid-West Energy Unit, will seek to develop out PATHFINDER projects in 2026 working towards decarbonisation actions in buildings such as Ennis Leisure Centre, Áras Contae an Chláir and across the smaller buildings in our register. Participation in the PATHFINDER programme will enable Local Authorities to draw down 50% fundings towards the implementation of these projects. The balance of funding (50%) will be subject to Members' approval of a loan and corresponding revenue budget provision.

Projects (residential estates) under the Developer Provided Water Services Infrastructure under the Multi-Annual DPWSI Resolution Programme

Projects include:

- Works to the Wastewater Treatment Plant at Glen Abhainn - grant funded with the balance of 25% to be provided by Clare County Council
- Works to improve the effluent treatment in the Ardnacrusa agglomeration for the following estates: Ballyglass, Castlebank, Lackyle, Lackyle Heights, Parkroe and Keelgrove - grant funded with the remaining 25% to be provided by Clare County Council

These projects will be delivered in conjunction with Uisce Éireann, with the Clare County Council funding provision being subject to Members' approval of loan finance.

Waste Water Collection and Treatment Systems

Clare County Council has 2 projects underway under *Measure A8 - Waste Water Collection and Treatment needs for Villages and Settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services* for the villages of Broadford and Cooraclare. These applications are for the delivery of a Waste Water Treatment Collection and Treatment system for both agglomerations and are 85% grant funded up to the grant allocation. The works will also be progressed in conjunction with Uisce Éireann with Clare County Council's funding provision being subject to Members' approval of loan finance.

Rural Water Programme

Clare County Council is responsible for the management of projects involving new or upgrading of Group Water and Sewerage Schemes and for the provision of grants for domestic bored wells under a devolved programme. Clare County Council also facilitates and compiles the submissions for taking in charge applications to Uisce Éireann for Group Water and Sewerage Schemes. Funding for these continues to be provided by the DHLGH.

Emergency Management, Fire & Building Control

The Fire Service remains proactive in ensuring an efficient and effective emergency service in Clare and to that end, during 2026 the following projects will be progressed or completed:

Fire Service Headquarters & Ennis Fire Station Redevelopment Works

Clare County Council have received approval to engage professional consultants to prepare a detailed submission for a Fire Service Headquarters and 8-bay station in Ennis, Co Clare. The approval is on the basis that the scale, facilities and specifications for the proposed development should not exceed those necessary for the provision of a fire services headquarters and fire station in Ennis. It is intended to progress on this basis in early 2026.

Class B High Reach Aerial Fire Appliance

Feasibility studies are being carried out on the suitability of procuring a Class B High Reach Aerial Fire Appliance for the County Fire & Rescue Service. Approval for grant aid from the Department was received and it is anticipated that the vehicle will be delivered in 2026.

West Clare Municipal District

Ballyvaughan Footpaths Upgrade

Footpath upgrade works are required to be carried out adjacent to the pier in Ballyvaughan and will include the provision of car parking spaces adjacent to the road to complement proposed upgrade works to the R477 at this location in 2026. It is also proposed to improve sea defences at this location. It is envisaged that these works will cost approx. €300k. Funding for this project has yet to be identified.

Liscannor Village Specific Improvement Grant Scheme

It is proposed to undertake a full dig out, reconstruction and overlay of Liscannor road with 2 village entry points, pedestrian crossing and road narrowing for traffic calming, in addition to the creation of a school zone, drainage and footpath works. Specific Improvement Grant of €1.987m has been applied for with a 10% match fund commitment of €200k. If funding is received, this project will commence in Q4 of 2026.

Active Kilrush Master Plan - Implementation

The priority infrastructure project proposed for the Active Kilrush site is a large sports hall that will accommodate indoor basketball and other indoor sports. This will also provide toilet and changing facilities for all other sports that take place at the site including soccer, GAA and athletics. An application for funding under the first tranche of Large-Scale Sport Infrastructure Fund (LSSIF) funding for the construction of the indoor sports facility was submitted in 2024 but was not successful under this phase. There may be further opportunities for funding under the LSSIF for this project in the future

Platforms for Growth Water based Activity Centre (Ballycuggeran and Kilkee)

Facility Centres for Water Sports Activities in Ballycuggeran and Kilkee, under the Failte Ireland Platforms for Growth Investment Scheme 2019-2026, received planning permission from An Coimisiún Pleanála in 2023. The County Clare Tourism Strategy 2030, the Lough Derg Visitor Experience Development Plan (VEDP) and the Shannon Tourism Masterplan all set out strategic

priorities & objectives that underpin sustainable tourism. Both innovation and critical infrastructure are needed to deliver these bold plans. Permanent water sports facilities that are committed to responsible tourism and sustainability very much fit into this critical infrastructure. Compelling and high-quality activity infrastructure is an important element of this critical infrastructure.

The facility in Ballycuggeran commenced construction on site in October 2024 with an expected completion date of August 2026. The facility will provide new public toilets, changing areas, hot showers, secure storage, induction spaces and equipment washdown, and will be open for an extended period of time to cover the demands at the location.

The facility in Kilkee received planning approval with a number of conditions attached. Condition 3 is dependent on a commitment from Uisce Eireann in relation to the discharge of foul drainage from the proposed facility. The proposed Wastewater Facility for Kilkee has not commenced currently so the Platforms for Growth building in Kilkee is currently on hold.

Wood River Walk Greenway Kilrush

The Wood River Walk project received funding under the Outdoor Recreation & Infrastructure Scheme and is due to be completed in 2026. This is a key link between the Marina and Vandeleur Woods. It also is a vital connection for the future development at the Mars Cinema and will serve as a necessary exit point from the building. Final land agreements and environmental studies are ongoing with the aim to commence works early 2026.

Carrigaholt to Caravan Park Pathway

A new footpath connecting the village of Carrigaholt to the main caravan park on the L2400 is due to be completed in 2026. This will improve the safety of pedestrians who currently walk on the public road and works will include increasing site distances along the road which will also assist with improved safety of road users. This is being delivered by the Municipal District with assistance from the General Design Office. Development contributions are the main source of funding for the project.

Sport, Recreation & Amenity

Refurbishment of Running Track and Ancillary Athletic Facilities at John O'Sullivan Park

A full refurbishment of the athletics track and field facilities at John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road is planned for delivery in 2026. The project is at procurement stage with sports capital and development contribution funding identified to the tune of €480k. The project is anticipated to cost in the order of €1.2m with the balance to be identified.

Upgrade of Flood Lighting and Refurbishment and Extension of Toilets facilities in John O'Sullivan Park

A €200k commitment was given for the upgrade and extension of the above mentioned facilities at John O'Sullivan Park. The lighting refit has been completed and the works to renovate and double the size of the existing toilet facilities to accommodate over 400,000 annual visitors is underway. Delivery is anticipated in early 2026.

Planning, Economic, Rural & Community Development Directorate
(€29.2m 2026-2028 - €12.9m funding to be identified)

The Planning, Economic, Rural & Community Development Directorate has planned capital expenditure of €29.2m in the three-year period 2026-2028. A primary focus of the Directorate for 2026-2028 will be progressing a number of capital projects, subject to funding. Key projects include:

Planning, Placemaking and Economic Development

Ennistymon Public Realm Works

Ennistymon public realm works at The Square and at Parliament Street, Ennistymon are set to commence in 2026 on foot of funding secured under Town and Village Renewal and funding from Clare County Council. The project evolved from the Ennistymon Town Masterplan which was a community-led plan developed by Ennistymon Town Team with the support of Clare County Council and CLDC.

Taking in Charge

During 2026, the substantial programme of remediation works on private housing estates will continue where bond monies have been claimed and where works are required in order to bring the services within the developments up to an acceptable standard. These works will significantly improve the residential amenities for the people living in these estates. It is planned to spend €1.5m over the next 3 years in these estates funded primarily from bonds.

Town Centre First

Town Centre First (TCF) Plans and Supports

The National Town Centre First Policy seeks to create vibrant, viable and attractive town centres. Clare County Council's Town Regeneration Department works closely with local Town Teams to deliver this policy at a community level. Town Centre First emphasises the importance of high-quality public spaces - streets, parks and amenities - that foster social interaction and recreation. Sixmilebridge was the first town in Clare designated as a PATHFINDER town under the Town Centre First initiative. Its Town Centre First Plan, published in June 2023, sets out key objectives to enhance Sixmilebridge as a desirable place to live, work and visit. To support implementation, the Sixmilebridge Town Team was established and, in partnership with Clare County Council, successfully secured €50k under the Project Development Measure within the Town Centre First Suite of Supports.

Work is now underway to bring the plan's top priority project to planning stage, ensuring it is shovel-ready for future funding opportunities. Lisdoonvarna Town Team, also working with Clare County Council, secured €50k under the same measure to develop an enhanced design for the Town Square. Significant progress has been made on a second Town Centre First Plan for Kilrush. A newly formed Town Team is actively shaping the draft plan, which is expected to be published in Q1 2026 following further public consultation.

Additionally, Town Teams have been established in Tulla and Lisdoonvarna, with a third team currently forming in Clarecastle under the Town Centre First process. Further opportunities to develop additional Town Centre First Plans are anticipated in 2026-2027.

Rural and Community Development

Burial Grounds

Burial Grounds is an essential service and Clare County Council remains committed to providing an efficient and professional service. It is anticipated that capital works will commence on the extension of the county burial ground at Drumcliff in 2026. The budget submission further defines the supports offered to community groups in their invaluable work at community burial grounds.

CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) programme

The CLÁR programme provides targeted funding for small-scale infrastructural and amenity projects in rural communities experiencing significant population decline. The Rural Development Directorate will continue to administer Measure 1: ‘Developing Community Facilities & Amenities’ with funding for the enhancement of existing and/or the development of new, accessible community recreation facilities. In the current programme, the maximum grant under Measure 1 has increased from €50k to up to €65k for standard projects, with a new option for up to €100k for 2 larger-scale projects per Local Authority.

Town and Village Renewal Scheme

The Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS) is a national initiative under the overarching policy “Our Rural Future” and works closely with the Town Centre First and Our Living Islands frameworks. The TVRS is designed to support the revitalisation of rural towns and villages by stimulating economic and social regeneration in town centre locations. Under the Main Scheme: funding commonly ranges from €50k to €300k per project, with some larger awards up to €500k available. Under the Project Development Measure: grants of up to €50k for feasibility/design/early-stage works. Under the Building or Land Acquisition Measure: Local Authorities may acquire vacant/derelict buildings or lands for regeneration (up to €500k per Local Authority).

Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS)

The ORIS scheme supports the development, enhancement, repair, maintenance or promotion of outdoor recreation infrastructure that is, in the main, freely available to the public in the countryside (not within the environs of towns and villages) and that contributes to healthy active lifestyles and the economic and tourism potential of rural areas across the county. It is aligned with the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy and supports activities such as walking, trekking, cycling, kayaking, hiking and other outdoor amenities. Funding ranges from €50k to €500k in the current scheme.

Ennis Municipal District

Parking

Clare County Council, in a joint venture with Clare GAA, intends constructing a 200-space car park at the back of 'The Cloister' premises for which planning permission is already secured by Clare GAA, with full cost recovery. This project is aligned with the 2025 announcement of €7m THRIVE funding for the 'Cloister' project. During 2025, additional car parking spaces were developed at the Gort Road Industrial Estate following a Part VIII planning application. The need for Park & Stride Facilities has also been identified and Ennis Municipal District continues work to deliver a solution.

Town Bus Service

Engagement continues with the NTA (National Transport Authority) regarding the implementation of a town bus service for Ennis to be rolled out during 2026. Funding has been committed with the intention to provide for a fully electrified service subject to acquisition of a suitable depot site. Ennis Municipal District is working with the NTA and local stakeholders to secure a site with plans at an advanced stage in terms of the proposed routes and the location of bus stops. While the overall works will be fully funded by the NTA, there may be an element of own resources required for some ancillary works in the town centre as a consequence of the bus service.

Bridges

Clare County Council is seeking to deliver infrastructure by way of 3 bridges at Corrovorrin, Droichead na Gabhair and Francis Street-to-New Road. It is recognised that this infrastructure is important to ensure pedestrian connectivity at key locations in the town. At this point, the NTA have committed to fully fund the new bridge at Corrovorrin while the Municipal District continues to seek a funding source for the others.

Ballyallia Enhancement Plan

Ballyallia is a key amenity for Ennis and surrounds. The investment plan aims to deliver a range of upgrades at the amenity. It is acknowledged that while a dedicated source of funding is being sought through grant aid to achieve the whole project, the Municipal District will continue to identify elements of the plan that can be delivered through local funding streams and initiatives with the overall objective to continually improve the facilities.

Finance, Investment & Enterprise Directorate (€27.4m 2026-2028 - €26.1m funding to be identified)

The Finance, Investment & Enterprise Directorate has planned capital expenditure of €27.4m in the three-year period 2026-2028. A primary focus of the Directorate for 2026-2028 will be progressing a wide number of capital projects, subject to funding.

Shannon Municipal District

Key projects in the Shannon Municipal District in the 2026-2028 period include:

Shannon Town Civic Space

We are now taking the opportunity to revisit and review both the business case and the

preliminary designs for the One Shannon Hub. Our intention is to work collaboratively with Members to agree on what we, as a Council, want to deliver for Shannon Town and its environs, taking into account our financial and other capacities. We wish to give a clear and firm commitment that Shannon Town deserves and needs a meaningful development for its community and residents, and we are determined to ensure that this project reflects those needs and aspirations in a Shannon Town Civic Space.

Finian Park, Shannon- Public Realm Upgrade

Regeneration of a central public space in Finian Park, Shannon creating an accessible, green and inclusive plaza that enhances community connection, supports events and integrates sustainable urban design. Subject to Town & Village Renewal (TVR) funding approval in 2026.

Newmarket-on-Fergus- Public Realm Upgrade

Newmarket-on-Fergus Public Realm Upgrade Project proposes to redefine the streetscape so that it is accessible to today's standards and is safe and attractive to all service users. The renewal will also provide a high quality communal urban space for business owners, residents and tourists whilst also building pride in the community. Subject to Town & Village Renewal Funding (TVR) funding approval in 2026.

Sixmilebridge Riverside Town Park

A town park is proposed which includes an outdoor gym and a base for kayaking and canoeing. This project is at feasibility stage following the completion of the Sixmilebridge Town Centre First Plan. Its progression hinges on the results of this feasibility study and the identification of the necessary funding.

O'Garney Bridge, Sixmilebridge/Traffic Lights

O'Garney Bridge upgrade to provide safe pedestrian passageway and provision of a traffic lights system to alleviate traffic congestion. This upgrade will be subject to funding.

Westbury and Shannon Stormwater Pumpstations

Strategic upgrade of Stormwater Pumpstations in Westbury, Corbally & Shannon.

Tourism, Festivals, Libraries & Cultural Services Directorate (€41.4m 2026-2028 - €9m funding to be identified)

The Tourism, Festivals, Libraries & Cultural Services Directorate has planned capital expenditure of €41.4m in the three-year period 2026-2028. This provides for projects such as the development of the Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk, the upgrade of the Wastewater Treatment Plant at the Cliffs of Moher Experience, refurbishment works to Library buildings, works to the Glór theatre building as well as the advancement of key projects identified for Killaloe Municipal District. The Directorate will be progressing a wide number of capital projects, subject to funding. Key projects include:

Tourism

Inis Cealtra (Holy Island)

Phase 1 of this development is complete. An Coimisiún Pleanála approved planning permission for phase 2 of this project. Phase 1 saw the completion of the Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) Visitor Centre in the heart of Mountshannon village. Overlooking Mountshannon Harbour and Lough Derg, the 'Old Rectory' is an historic period house dating from 1905 which was repurposed and extended into a Visitor and Interpretative Centre for Inis Cealtra (Holy Island). Phase 2 involves the development of the marina for access to Holy Island as well as the upgrade of the access point on Holy Island and ancillary developments. Funding is not currently available for this phase of the project. Section 135 provides for the finalisation of Phase 1 of this project.

Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre

The report provides for the final account for the development works at Vandeleur Walled Gardens. Works have been ongoing since 2021 to extensively restore and renovate the site as part of an overall Visitor Development Strategy that also includes the improved use of the 420 acres of surrounding native woodland (not Council-owned property). The 140-seater indoor and outdoor café and restaurant is operational under contract at Vandeleur Walled Garden and Visitor Centre, catering for visitors and corporate/festive events.

Cliffs of Moher Experience/Clare Tourism Northwest

A draft Cliffs of Moher Experience Strategy 2040 and associated masterplan supported by Fáilte Ireland has been prepared following extensive public and stakeholder consultation. Statutory environmental processes have been completed. Central to the strategy is enhancing the economic benefits for the surrounding towns and villages providing sustainable access to the Cliffs of Moher, optimising the visitor experience and conservation of the landscape including the Special Protection Area. A masterplan design package is to be finalized to bring detailed designs to planning to include site developments. A necessary infrastructure upgrade required at the Cliffs of Moher Experience is the Wastewater Treatment Plant. A new office building is currently under construction adjacent to the Ennistymon Digital Hub on Monastery Lane as provided for in the Section 135 report.

Shannon Heritage Sites/East Clare Tourism

Capital investment is required at the Shannon Heritage sites. A masterplan is to be reviewed to secure funding from industry partners to upgrade and develop a product at Bunratty Castle & Folk Park, Craggaunowen Bronze Age Park and Knappogue Castle & Gardens.

Libraries & Cultural Services

Library buildings

The Section 135 report provides for the upgrade of library buildings in association with SEAI to achieve energy efficiencies and reduce operational costs. The focus for 2026 is on Ennistymon library which is in need of works as a priority.

Mobile Library

We are delighted that funding has been secured to deliver a mobile library for the county. We look forward to introducing this service in 2026 and extending our service to areas not currently served.

Glór buildings

Works are required on the Glór theatre building to address issues, improve energy performance and secure the property for the future. The Section 135 Report provides for these works with a requirement to secure additional funding sources to proceed with this project.

THRIVE project

Clare County Council was successful in securing funding from the Southern Regional Assembly of circa €7m for the redevelopment of the Cloister building in Ennis. THRIVE is funded by the Government of Ireland and the ERDF Regional Programmes through the Southern Regional Assembly, and Ennis was listed as the Clare town eligible for funding. This transformative project will see the redevelopment of a vacant heritage property in the town. Following a successful application under THRIVE Funding to the Southern Regional Assembly, Clare County Council was successful in being awarded €194k under Strand 1. The building acquisition cost is not funded and will require to be funded from the Council's own resources.

Killaloe Municipal District

Scariff Rural Regeneration Project

Works on this project are ongoing having commenced with the redevelopment of a derelict building to an enterprise and community hub, and the development of a new town centre car park. The next phase is the Market Square public realm/redevelopment, with an overall project purse of €11.1m with €8.9m from the Department RRDF and match funding from the Local Authority of €2.2m.

Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement & Mobility Plan

In October 2025, Clare County Council welcomed the announcement of €1m in funding under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) for the delivery of significant public realm regeneration and enhancement projects in Killaloe and Ballina. The funding, announced by the Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, Dara Calleary TD, will support the Killaloe-Ballina Twin Town Tourism, Regeneration and Enhancement Project, enabling the project to progress through detailed design, public consultation, and statutory planning approval. The project also places a strong emphasis on sustainable transport solutions, including enhanced pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, traffic management, and parking improvements, in line with the Killaloe-Ballina Town Enhancement and Mobility Plan.

