



COMHAIRLE CONTAE AN CHLÁIR
CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

INNOVATION STRATEGY

***“RAISING THE BANNER FOR
INNOVATION BY EMBRACING
OUR UNIQUE ENVIRONMENT,
PEOPLE AND RESOURCES
TO DELIVER FOR CLARE”***



Foreword:

It is with great pleasure that we present our first Innovation Strategy which sets out the overall strategic innovative priorities and actions for implementation as we go forward post pandemic. Innovation has been present in Clare County Council for some time having established a Business Review team in 2018 with a number of innovative projects successfully implemented across each directorate to date. The Covid-19 pandemic has reminded us that we are often required to pivot dramatically and quickly change how we serve our public. There have been sustained levels of resilience and commitment to continue providing services to our citizens.

This strategy will re-launch our innovative actions and align closely with the priority objectives as set out in our Corporate Plan and Annual Service Delivery Plan. It has been informed by a number of workshops facilitated by EY, Business Advisory Services, The Innovation Group (multi-disciplinary team across the 5 directorates), Senior Team and Management Team.

It is clear that staff across Clare County Council have embraced innovation with enthusiasm. The strategy aims to build on this momentum and position Clare County Council to seize innovative opportunities, ensure people can easily and effectively access information and services. In addition it will serve as a statement of intent to drive innovation and transformation across the county and fuel economic and community development.

It will ensure alignment to the overarching vision and key priorities to help shape the future positioning of Clare County Council as being a leader in public service delivery. It will enable us to continue deliver a high quality service to our citizens that are efficient, integrated and inclusive.

This will effectively re-launch the Business Review Team to the Business Innovation Team and create a strategy and implementation plan for the council. Team innovation is the backbone of every successful organisation and is what helps it grow and prosper.

Le meas,

Mr PJ Ryan
Cathaoirleach
Clare County Council



Mr Pat Dowling
Chief Executive
Clare County Council



Message from the Innovation Strategy Sponsor:

I am delighted, as sponsor, to introduce you to Clare County Council’s Innovation Strategy – “Raising the Banner for Innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare”

The years 2020 and 2021 have been extraordinary globally in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. Council staff had to adapt to new ways of working while continuing to provide a wide range of services to people, businesses and communities. However, as the saying goes “never waste a crisis” and Clare County Council adapted well and implemented the required digital technologies to ensure continued provision of services and will continue to maximize on these technologies to ensure further innovative progression within Clare County Council.

Innovation is about finding new means of delivering services and policy responses in ways that can add value to the people we serve. This value can take many forms - greater access to services; more efficient, effective and intuitive interventions; increased transparency and trust in our policy responses or; divesting our organisations of unnecessary, cumbersome or antiquated processes and systems. This strategy is closely aligned with the 3 priorities as set out in DPER’s Innovation Strategy – Citizen Centric Innovation – Culture of Innovation – Scaling up Innovation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all staff across the organisation for their time, energy and commitment, especially in light of the exceptional circumstances which prevailed throughout the development of this strategy. We are delighted to launch this strategy however we acknowledge it’s the first stepping stone on a long exciting innovative journey. I am confident that the development of this strategy gives us a clear focus and direction identifying key priorities, actions and timelines to further encompass bigger innovative progression throughout Clare County Council.

Noeleen Fitzgerald (Innovation Strategy Sponsor)
Director of Services - Finance & Support Services
Clare County Council





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Innovation Strategy

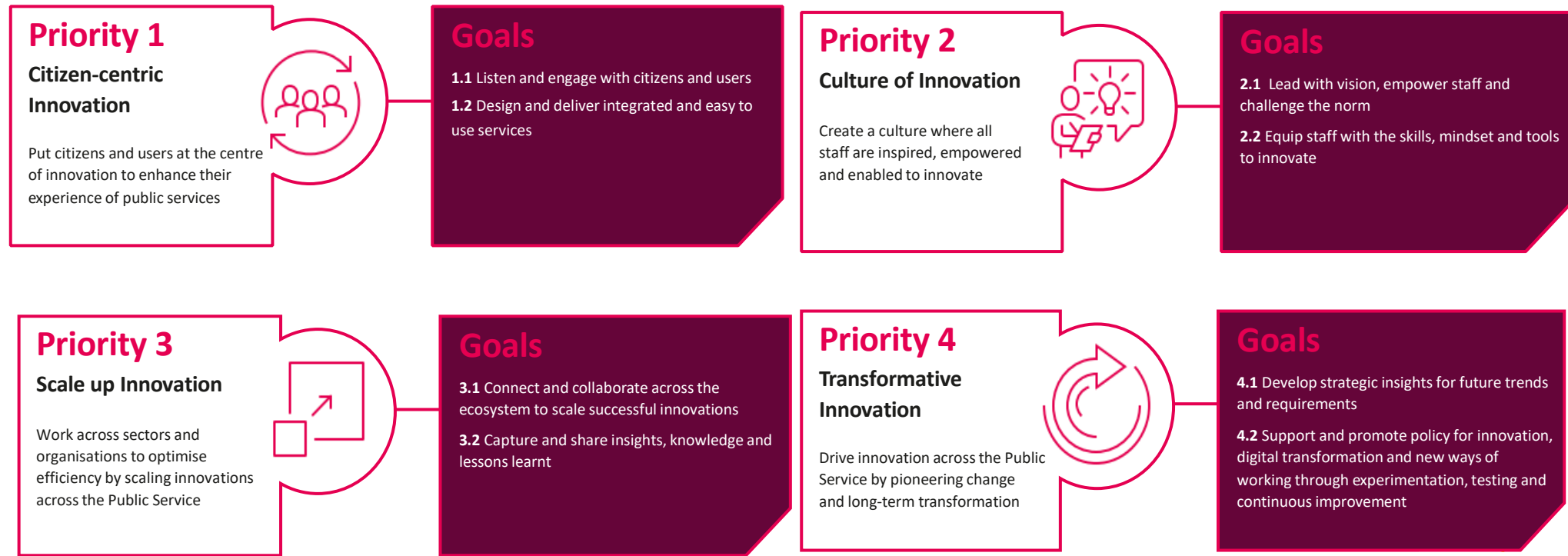
Making Innovation Real.

Context

Public Service Innovation Strategy.

Innovation has been defined as “the creation of a new, viable offering that adds value” and is deemed a critical requirement for all Public Service Organisations to progress the development and delivery of services both today and for tomorrow, as per OPS2020 and the SRSS Report. This Innovation Strategy reflects this need to continuously improve, deliver best in class services and to tackle the major challenges and opportunities facing both Clare County Council and Ireland. Clare County Council is supporting the innovation vision set out in DPER’s “Innovation Strategy for the Irish Public Service” and will join its colleagues in the Civil and Public Service in aspiring to “harness the power of innovation to deliver world-class public services in Ireland”. Whilst supporting the national vision we, Clare County Council will also aim to “Raise the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare”. This document sets out Clare Council’s approach to developing the Innovation Strategy, the priorities for innovation within Clare County Council, the initiatives and actions under each priority and concludes with a path to “make innovation real” through an implementation and high-level governance plan.

Context for Innovation: DPER Priorities





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Innovation Strategy

Making Innovation Real.

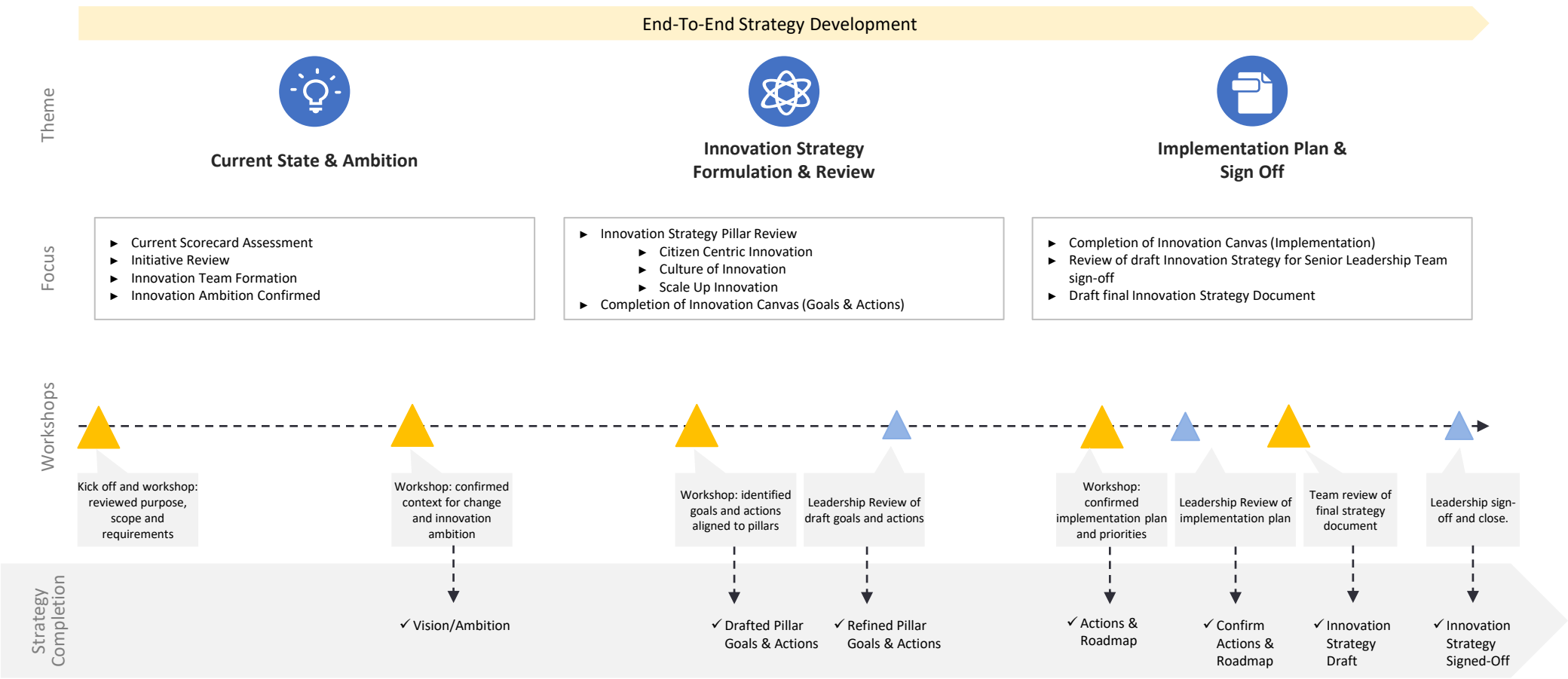
Approach

How We Developed The Strategy.

Innovation Strategy | Approach

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

To progress Innovation Strategy development a project was undertaken. This included a number of interactive virtual workshops and meetings attended by the team outlined on the next page. These workshops assisted in developing a collective view of the requirements and focus for the Innovation Strategy. The timeline and activities are presented below.



To enable the creation of the Innovation Strategy, a **multi-disciplinary team** spanning five directorates was established. The objectives for this team was and will continue to brainstorm development areas in facilitated workshop sessions, identify solutions and initiatives to address these areas and formulate a plan to implement these initiatives.

Sponsor



Director of Service -
Finance & Support
Services
Noeleen Fitzgerald

Project Lead



Administrative Officer –
Finance & Support
Services
Colette Costello



Senior Executive Officer
– Finance & Support
Services
Ann Reynolds



Assistant Staff Officer –
Finance & Support
Services
Sinead Armstrong Lynch



Senior Enterprise
Development Officer –
Economic Development
Linda Earlie



Rural & Community
Development Officer -
Margaret Cotter



Staff Officer – Economic
Development
Fiona Whelan



Assistant Staff Officer –
Physical Development
Angela O'Connor



Head of Information
Systems – Finance &
Support Services
Alfie Jones



Staff Officer – Social
Development
Linda Conneally



Administrative Officer –
Physical Development
Liam O'Connor



Environmental Patrol
Warden – Physical
Development
Norah Murphy



Senior Executive
Engineer – Social
Development
Niamh Madden



Director – Technology
Consulting EY
Cillian Leonowicz



Assistant Staff Officer –
Physical Development
Mairead Griffin



Assistant Staff Officer –
Economic Development
Anne Moloney



Clerical Officer – Rural
Development
Siobhan O'Doherty



Executive Librarian –
Social Development
Frances Pender



Assistant Staff Officer –
Rural Development
Philomena O'Connell



Administrative Officer –
Finance & Support
Services
Patricia McNamara



Manager – Technology
Consulting EY
Donal Cahill

External Facilitators

Strengths

Location / Amenities:

- Towns that are a great place to live
- Education services (University, Secondary and Primary)
- Lower cost of living
- World renowned tourist attractions
- Blue flag beaches
- Variety of activities (Golf, surfing, hotels)

Business

- Access to two cities, motorway and airport
- Culture of entrepreneurship
- Access to high quality broadband
- Resources (People, Clean Energy)
- Reputation for holding great events

Weaknesses

Business:

- Shannon Airport
 - Name is misleading
 - Close proximity to Dublin
- Job opportunities / Depopulation
 - Less local opportunities for young people
 - Reliance on neighbouring cities
 - Often dependent on tourism

Infrastructure:

- Limited public transport
- Health Care availability
- Rural broadband connectivity
- Lack of residential accommodation
- Water & waste infrastructure (Rural)
- Derelict buildings
- Local facilities (sports halls)

Opportunities

Business / Resource / People Attraction:

- Remote Working: People relocating to Clare
- Brexit – Clare as a gateway to Europe
- Opportunities for renewable energy
- Continuation of virtual services
- Innovation grants
- Shannon Airport
- Data Centres
- Active community engagement

Tourism

- WAW and Hidden Heartlands
- Turning day trips into longer visits
- Promoting the county nationally and internationally
- Sustainability tourism (i.e. sustainable communities)
- Annual fleadh and similar events
- Tackling dereliction and vacant properties.
- Maximise economic potential of Council owned property.
- Motorway opportunities

Threats

Business:

- Major industries leaving county
- Dwindling workforce
- Brexit impact on enterprises
- Competing with well represented counties for FDI

Infrastructure:

- Climate threat
- Lack of suitable accommodation
 - Social housing
 - In rural environments
 - Dereliction
 - Empty holiday homes
- Lack of services in rural villages
- Lack of physical infrastructure in rural villages (sewerage, broadband)

Innovation Strategy | Personas

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

To meet the needs of Clare people and county stakeholders, the Innovation Team used 4 different personas to help frame the areas that innovative thinking can be best used to address. Using these persona's, the Innovation team were able to identify and focus what was really important to County Clare and it's citizens & stakeholders.

	Needs		Wants		Desires	
Sean	Health Service	Social Opportunities	Closer to family	Social support and outlets	Services suitable for his family	Job Opportunities for his family
	Independence	Transport	Proximity to goods/ services	Community initiatives	To remain in Ennis	A sense of community
Jane and Brian	Healthcare	Access to Dublin	Enterprise Opportunity / Support	Childcare	Family friendly	Business growth
	Housing Options	Local Amenities	Work Infrastructure	Good Schools	Urban and rural activities	Parenting groups
Deirdre & Michael	Proximity	Attractions	Good public transport	Attraction bundles	An experience	Variety
	Activities	Understanding of what is available	Vibrancy	Value for money		
David	Serviced office space	Transport and cargo links	English speaking	Equality	Entrepreneurial eco system	Tax and rent consistency
	Available STEM talent	Accommodation	Value for money	Ability to grow	Favourable area for young families	University links to drive R&D

Top 5 Innovation Initiatives

Current Initiatives

Implementation of existing strategies
Digital & Enterprise
Tourism
Service Delivery & Digital
Infrastructure
Climate changes

Future Focus

Climate changes and sustainability
Digital Transformation
Infrastructure
Service Delivery & Customer Engagement
Circular Economy
Change Enablement

Organisation Overview

Organisation Strengths

Crisis response	Hubs & visibility
Staff & Skillset	Learning & Development
Staff Progression	Management support
Amenities	Diversity of services
Strategy Development	Community links

Innovation Barriers and Enablers

Enablers for Innovation

Calls for ideas	Info sharing among L.A
COVID	National Innovation Incentive
ICT	
Funding	
Open door policy	

Organisation Weaknesses

Measuring customer opinion	Cross council comms
Customer appreciation	Project Planning
Outdated technology	Limited resources
Talent Attraction	Siloed organisation
Resistance to change	Making change stick

Barriers to Innovation

Lack of funding	Compliance process
Poor ICT	Apathy toward role
Lack of resourcing	Customer acceptance
Current procurement process	No time to implement change
No time to focus on innovation	



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Innovation Strategy

Making Innovation Real.

Result

The Strategy.

Focus for Innovation in Clare County Council

This Innovation Strategy is developed to support the national vision, deliver on our ambition and moreover to tackle the strategic challenges and opportunities facing Clare and Clare County Council. These challenges and opportunities include:

Key Challenges

- Providing the dedicated time and resources to focus on innovation
- To develop our ICT infrastructure
- To improve customer experiences

Key Opportunities

- Leveraging national innovation incentive to deliver for Clare
- Connecting with other Local Authorities to share insights, ideas and good practices
- Capture the energy and agility used during COVID-19 Pandemic to deliver for Clare
- Position for tomorrow by using our natural resources, landscape and geographic location to become leaders in sustainability

Moreover, this Innovation Strategy is developed to enhance and embed a culture of innovation. To empower our leadership, teams and staff to bring forward new ideas, to continuously improve capabilities, to collaborate with our partners, to create value, and, to transform our services and delivery models to meet the emerging needs of our stakeholders and to truly “make innovation real”. The Innovation Strategy has been developed by Clare County Councils innovation team, multi-disciplinary stakeholders and has been approved by the Management Team.

Innovation Strategy

Making Innovation Real.

Responding to DPER’s Ambition of “Harnessing the power of innovation to deliver world-class public services in Ireland,” Clare County Council formed a team which was responsible for developing an Innovation Strategy for the county which has been outlined on page 10. Together with external facilitators from EY and senior leadership, the team held multiple workshops to identify the key areas to which the strategy should focus on. Following extensive reviews and refinement, Clare County Council is proud to present an Innovation Strategy that will “Raise the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare”. In order to achieve this goal, the Innovation Strategy will focus on these three priorities: Citizen-centric Innovation, Culture of Innovation and Scale up Innovation.

**Irish Public Service
Innovation Vision**

“Harness the power of innovation to deliver world-class public services in Ireland”

**Clare County Council
Innovation Ambition**

“Raising the Banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

Priority 1 | Citizen-centric Innovation

Put citizens and users at the centre of innovation to enhance their experience of public services

1.1 Listen and engage with all citizens
1.2. Design and deliver integrated and easy to use services

Priority 2 | Culture of Innovation

Create a culture where all staff are inspired, empowered and enabled to innovate

2.1 Lead with vision, empower staff and challenge the norm
2.2 Equip staff with the skills, mindset and tools to innovate

Priority 3 | Scale up Innovation

Work across sectors and organisations to optimise efficiency by scaling innovations across the Irish Public Service

3.1 Cultivate connections and collaborate across the ecosystem
3.2 Share insights, knowledge and lessons learned

Please note: Priority 4: Transformative Innovation was not included here as it is a national focus priority.

Priority 1 | Citizen-centric innovation

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

Goals	Actions	Action Owner	Success Criteria	Measurement	Time Horizon
1.1. Listen and engage with the citizen	Implement a CRM system which incorporates the “Have Your Say” collaboration tool to manage all customer interactions and to support service delivery. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capture all customer interactions • Obtain customer feedback • Progress an annual user satisfaction survey 	All Directorates. Driven centrally from Corporate (Colette). Project team to be put in place.	Delivery of the CRM and Record Management solution. Completion of 5 month development cycle. Aligned with change management requirements.	Install, completion of testing, go-live. Training and education of users.	End of 2022 for full implementation.
1.2. Design and deliver integrated and easy to use services	Use customer journey mapping to identify and confirm the needs, wants and pain points of users to inform service design and delivery. (align to development of CRM)	All Directorates.	Review of business processes with Customer facing service delivery. Reflection in the newly deployed/developed processes within the CRM system with alignment to the new service catalogue.	Workflows with identified services owners reflected in the CRM or associated system where appropriate.	End of 2022 for full implementation.

Priority 2 | Culture of Innovation

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

Goals	Actions	Action Owner	Success Criteria	Measurement	Time Horizon
2.1. Lead with vision, empower staff and challenge the norm	Promote creativity and innovation by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adding Innovation as a standing item on SMT meetings Provide innovation training to leaders and the innovation team Assign a dedicated innovation budget 	Corporate and HR with Noeleen Fitzgerald as Sponsor.	Completion of training and inclusion in the Management Team Agenda.	Completion of training for the innovation team.	End of 2021.
2.2. Equip staff with the skills, mindset and tools to innovate	Articulate and encourage “ <i>internal pathways for innovation</i> ”. This can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal call for ideas Deployment of collaboration tools Clear path for idea progression to SMT review 	The Innovation Team	Holding a “Call for Ideas” and developing the process with check points for idea progression.	Making and winning applications for the DPER Innovation Fund and other type programmes e.g. National Broadband Plan or the Western Development Corridor.	Call for Ideas from DPER in 2022.
	Create a multi-disciplinary innovation team from across all grades and departments within the County Council to focus on the opportunities and challenges facing the organisation and how they can be addressed and/or leveraged to create solutions	The Innovation Team	Achieve the goals set out in the previous goal. Capturing ideas from Directorates to deliver change and new capability. Enabling cross-functional collaboration and an associated culture of innovation. Challenge and test our traditional delivery models to enable change. Set KPI’s for the Innovation Team	Identifying “quick wins” and concrete ideas to progress. Increase in cross-collaboration engagement and development. Review KPI’s on a quarterly basis to reflect on performance and lessons learned.	A minimum of 2 ideas and projects completed in 2021.

Priority 3 | Scale Up Innovation

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

Goals	Actions	Action Owner	Success Criteria	Measurement	Time Horizon
3.1. Cultivate connections and collaborate across the ecosystem	Develop an ecosystem through partnerships with public and private organisations. Hold a cross-sectoral innovation event with other organisations to ideate and co-create a joint solution to shared challenges or opportunities, namely: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Development Zone with the University of Limerick, Limerick City & County Council Decarbonisation Zone Maritime Education Zone 	Economic Development Project. Need to confirm with Directorate Lead. Collaboration across the organisation as well as with key stakeholders.	Identification of short term gains for improvement and to identify immediate impact of programmes. Active participation and buy-in from stakeholders in these programmes. Agreed plan with stakeholders for delivery and outcomes realisation.	Level of collaboration and specific plans in place for delivery and to realise benefits. Hold a cross-sectoral innovation event. Reduction of CO2 levels in the Loop Head zone over time. Capturing learnings to implement in other zones and ultimately reduce CO2 levels in them.	Short term goals to be completed for end of 2021. Achievement then of overall project/programme timeframes.
	Scan the wider Irish Public Service network to identify existing projects or innovation initiatives which map to the organisation's immediate requirement and can be leveraged to inform the approach. In addition, identify where successful innovations within Clare County Council can be scaled elsewhere internally, and externally to the wider Irish Public Service. Example: ethics declaration with Microsoft	The Innovation Team	Continue to engage in local authority information and collaboration groups. Progression of “Town Halls” within the Directorate’s to progress and capture ideas. Innovation “Show and Tells” or “Lunch Time Learnings” to present ideas from teams across the organisation. Formalising time for Co-Ops and Student Placements to focus on “innovation” or “specialist” projects with the innovation team.	Number of “Town Halls”, number or “Lunch & Learns”, feedback from the team and organisation in terms of successes/impact. Completion of the “specialist” projects.	Two “Lunch & Learns” before year end 2021.
3.2. Share insights, knowledge and lessons learned	Set up an innovation portal to house all innovation related content in one place, making sure it is current and relevant. Develop an innovation section on the Banner Bulletin.	Innovation Team with support from Alfie Jones and Colette Costello.	Curation of the content for the portal. Maintenance and keeping it current. Reviewing access statistics to check and manage usage. Profiling of successful innovations.	Usage, participation and engagement with the platform.	Complete by the end of 2021.



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Innovation Strategy

Making Innovation Real.

Next Steps

Immediate Action Plan.

Innovation Strategy | Next Steps

“Raising the banner for innovation by embracing our unique environment, people and resources to deliver for Clare.”

Our Innovation Strategy is an evolving and organic process. To progress the strategy in the coming months we have identified the key initiatives that we need to align to as well as the next best actions and key enablers of implementing the Innovation Strategy.

Initiatives to align to.

Current documents or strategies to reference

1. Corporate Plan & Management Objectives

2. Tourism Strategy

3. Rural Development Strategy

4. Ennis 2040 Strategy

5. Digital Strategy

6. Climate Adaptation Strategy

7. Age Friendly Strategy

8. County Development Plan 2017-2023

9. National & International Strategies

Implementing the Strategy

Systems Required

1. Innovation portal

2. CRM and Records System deployment

3. Customer engagement portal

4. Online grants portal

5. Updating website and it's content

6. Improve technology in Clare County Council

7. Skills Mapping - Abodoo

Skills & Methodologies Required

1. Core innovation skills

2. Customer experience and journey mapping skills

3. Facilitation skills

4. Project management skills

Innovation Team Focus

Next Best Actions

1. Call for ideas within directorates

2. Development of the internal "innovation pathway"

3. Confirmation of first "innovation event" e.g. Lunch and Learn

4. Agree content for the "Innovation Portal"

5. Finalise Innovation Strategy and communicate work in the Banner Bulletin

Measuring Success

1. Deployment of the innovation portal

2. Hold two lunch and learn events by the end of 2021

3. Progress two ideas to implementation in the next 12 months

4. Have applications/ideas ready for funding initiatives e.g. DPER innovation fund



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Innovation Strategy

Making Innovation Real.

Appendix

My name is Sean and I was **born and bred** here in Ennis...
Parnell Street to be precise where my father used to run a butchers shop.
I left Clare in 1961 to train as a teacher in St Pats in Drumcondra.
After a few years in Dublin I met Eileen – a Tipperary woman! We got married
and in 1967 returned to Ennis.

I **retired from Flannan's** in 2002 after 35 great years of service. Eileen and I lived here together in Castle Lawn until last year when she died of a stroke. We have **two daughters**, they're grown up now, Marian is in Australia and Niamh lives in Dublin. She has a good job in the Bank and married Alan, an accountant. They have two sons Michael and John. I love going to see them, I usually go once a month on the bus, and when they come up in summer there's nothing better than going to a match or over to Lahinch for a walk and an ice-cream.

I suppose I **wish they could live here now but the opportunities are in Dublin**. What's keeping me here is age, I'm too old to move and I enjoy the GAA and meeting old friends in Knox's on a Thursday evening for a quiet one.

What I'd love to see in Clare are **opportunities for the kids to stay, that and having services without having to go to Galway or Limerick...** as I get older health services are a top priority.





Hi, we're Jane and Brian. Both **originally from Dublin**. We met in San Diego on our J1's and after nearly 10 years together got married last year in Tuscany. We **want to start a family and move somewhere that's not too rural but with a great quality of life**. Brian needs to be in Dublin two days a week for client meetings, he **runs his own software development firm**.

I'm more interested in a **healthy lifestyle** and being able to **raise a family** with nature around us and with good schools. I work as a **classroom assistant** during the day and in the evening I have a small yoga studio...I hope to move my studio to wherever we move. **Quality of life is key**, so is opportunity and being able to develop a **network of friends** so that we can have nice dinners out and socialise. **Cheaper house prices** are a benefit...but as I say it's all about quality of life for us.



Hi, we're Deirdre and Michael. We **live in Bray and both work in Dublin**. Life is hectic and there is nothing we love more than to get away (from the kids) for a **nice weekend down the country**. A great weekend away for me is usually a good book with a nice coffee in a local café and a stroll around the shops while Michael goes for a round of golf. After that it's a dinner with a few drinks and on Sunday mornings there's nothing better than stretching the legs for a walk and a light lunch before heading home.

We like **boutique hotels** and I'd definitely call Michael a "foodie" ...he's forever following Georgina Campbell and Lucinda O'Sullivan on **Twitter**. Last year we **went to Kilkenny and Galway**...they were fantastic....I loved the small little boutiques and cafes and the buzz in the pubs in the evenings with live music. We are currently deciding where to go next...**TripAdvisor** here we come!



Hi, my name is David and I am the **founder and CEO of a company** called Sensor Devices. We are **based in Guangzhou**, a city of 14 million people in South East China. Our business and its focus on developing **sensors for processes and machinery** in the life sciences industry has grown strongly and we need to get **closer to our Irish and European clients with our first European Office.**

We are currently looking for a site in Ireland where tax laws are favourable and I want us to get good value...I **am not prepared to pay high prices for commercial real estate in big urban centres.** What we will need is well serviced office space, bright **talented people** with an understanding of IoT technology and life sciences, and easy **access to an international airport** that serves Europe and ideally Asia. We will be making our investment decision in the coming weeks – its going to be either Ennis, Mullingar or Carlow.