



Comhairle Contae an Chláir  
Clare County Council

# Clare County Development Plan 2017–2023

## Chief Executive's Report to the Elected Members on progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Development Plan

18th December 2018



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## 1.0 Introduction and Purpose of Report

The Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 (CDP) was made on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2016 came into effect on the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and consists written statements and settlement plans for all the settlements within the County with the exception of Shannon, which has its own Shannon and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 (the making of a new plan deferred to 2023) as required by legislation.

Section 15(1) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that *'it shall be the duty of the Planning Authority to take such steps within its powers as may be necessary for securing the objectives of the Development Plan'*. Section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) states that *'the manager of a planning authority shall, not more than 2 years after the making of a development plan, give a report to the members of the authority on the progress achieved in securing the objectives referred to in subsection (1)'*.

This progress report, submitted to the Elected Members, on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2018 complies with the requirements of section 15(2) of the Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended). This is a report on the progress achieved in securing the objectives set out in the County Development Plan.

The report is structured in a similar nature to the Clare County Development Plan, outlining the key objectives contained in 'Volume 1: Written Statement' in a chapter by chapter format and summarising the progress in terms of these objectives to date in order to give a clear picture on their progress. Volume 3 includes the Written Statements and Settlement Plans for each of the four Municipal District Areas of the County and a review of the progress achieved in securing their implementation will be set out. Volumes 4 to 10 have all informed the objectives within the County Development Plan and are there to be read in conjunction with the Plan and comment is provided in this regard.

Since the adoption of the Plan, the following guidance has been issued by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and other Government Departments to Planning Authorities regarding their responsibilities in terms of planning. These are as follows:

- Part V of the Planning and Development Act - Guidelines 2017, Circular Housing 5/2017, April 2017
- Sustainable Rural Housing Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2005 – Local Needs Criteria in Development Plans, Circular PL2/2017, May 2017
- Planning and Development (Strategic Housing Development) Regulations 2017 and Related Commencement Order, Circular PL3/2017, June 2017
- Further extension of duration of planning permissions for certain developments of 20+ houses, Circular PL4/2017, July 2017
- Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change and Wind energy Development Guidelines 2006 – Update on review, Circular PL5/2017, August 2017

- Vacant Homes Action Plans, Circular PL7/2017, August 2017
- Implementation of 2014 EIA Directive – Advice on electronic notification requirements, Circular PL8/2017, September 2017
- Guidance on Planning Applications for short-term lettings, Circular PL10/2017
- Water Services Guidelines 2018 – Public Consultation, January 2018
- Amendments to Exempted Development Provisions in the Planning and Development Regulations, Circular PL01/2018, February 2018
- Publication of the National Planning Framework (NPF) Project Ireland 2010: Building Ireland’s Future, February 2018, Circular FPS 02/2018, February 2018
- Discussion of planning applications at Council meetings, Circular PL02/2018, March 2018
- Publication of Apartment Guidelines 2018, March 2018, Circular FPS 03/2018, March 2018
- Revision of Development Contribution Guidelines in respect of Telecommunications Infrastructure, Circular 03/2018, July 2018
- Implementation Roadmap for the National Planning Framework, Circular FPS04/2018, July 2017
- Urban Regeneration and Development Fund – Call for Proposals, Circular FPS05/2018, July 2018
- The National Planning Framework – clarification regarding the undertaking of SEA, AA and SFRA in the making of the NPF. Circular FPS 06/2018, July 2018
- Publication of Draft Urban Development and Building Heights Guidelines for Planning Authorities, Circular FPS07/2018, August 2018
- Planning and Development (Amendment ) Act 2018, Circular 04/2018, August 2018
- Transposition into Planning law of 2014 EIA Directive and Revised EIA Guidelines, Circular PL04/2018, August 2018
- EU (Planning and Development( (EIA) Regulations 2018 Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out of EIA, August 2018
- Urban and Regeneration Act 2015 (Sec.11) Vacant Site Levy Procedures for Planning Authorities, Circular PL06/2018, October 2018
- EIAR Drilling License Applications, circular PL07/2018, October 2018
- Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2018 (Commencement) Order 2018, Circular PL09-2018, November 2018
- Waiving of fee for the making of observations or submissions on planning applications by elected members, Circular PL 11/2018, November 2018

This report should be read in conjunction with the following:

Volume 2: Maps

Volume 3a: Ennis Municipal District Written Statement and Settlement Plans

Volume 3b: Shannon Municipal District Written Statement and Settlement Plans

Volume 3c: Killaloe Municipal District Written Statement and Settlement Plans

Volume 3d: West Clare Municipal District Written Statement and Settlement Plans

Volume 4: Record of Protected Structures

Volume 5: Clare Wind Energy Strategy

Volume 6: Clare Renewable Energy Strategy

Volume 7: Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary

Volume 8: Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016  
Volume 9: Joint Housing Strategy for Clare and Limerick Local Authorities 2010-2017  
Volume 10a: Natura Impact Report  
Volume 10b(i): Strategic Environmental Assessment – Non-Technical Report  
Volume 10b(ii): Strategic Environmental Assessment - Environmental Report  
Volume 10b(iii): Strategic Environmental Assessment – Statement  
Volume 10c: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

## **2.0 Volume 1: Written Statement - Progress Report on the Objectives**

### **2.1 Overview**

During the first two years of the implementation of the Plan the local economy continues to show recovery in line with a general upturn in the national economy, and reflected in an increase in public spending and in private investment.

In 2018 the National Planning Framework was published, and it is the Government's blueprint for future balanced growth. Upon adoption of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region anticipated to be in 2019, a re-assessment of the objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 will be required in order to align with national and regional planning policy.

The Planning Authority has monitored the effectiveness of the development plan objectives over the period since January 2017 and this report summarises the progress achieved, as well as future challenges facing the implementation of the objectives.

In the first two years of the Plan's existence there has been much activity with a number of the objectives having been achieved. The objectives outstanding will be pursued over the remainder of the Plan period to 2023.

Proposed variation No.1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 is currently in preparation and is intended to be on public display in December 2018 and will appear before the Elected Members for their consideration in early 2019.

### **2.2 Core Strategy**

The Core Strategy is set out in chapter 2 of the Plan and section 2.4.2 sets out how the Core Strategy will ensure compliance with the population targets as allocated by the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022. The individual written statements and settlement plans within the County Development Plan and the Shannon and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018, as extended, provide zoning for residential development and the associated objectives are consistent with the Core Strategy population targets set out in chapter 2 as allocated by the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.

Table 2.2 of the County Development Plan outlines the population targets for County Clare in 2016 and in 2022, with a target growth rate of 28% for the 16 year period between 2006 and 2022. The population of County Clare was 110,950 in 2006, 116,885 in 2011 and 118,817 in 2016. This is a population increase of 7,867 in the first ten years of the target period, which equates to a 7% increase in population. While this is below the target rate set out in the Mid-West populations, this was a period of widespread economic decline and out-migration. To maintain population growth at this time, when many parts of the country experienced population decline, was a significant achievement. Notwithstanding this, owing to this period where population growth was lower than anticipated, achieving the stated 2022 population target of 141,600 is likely to prove challenging. However, the County is well

positioned to achieve this growth rate by having detailed land use zoning objectives for all settlements in the County Development Plan, including the provision of sufficient residential zoned lands.

## **2.3 Development Activity**

The national economic recovery is reflected by development activity throughout County Clare, as is evidenced by an overall increase in the number of planning applications received during the Plan period to date. During 2017 1,015 applications for planning permission were received and during 2018 up to 30<sup>th</sup> November, 997 applications (including 12 Part 8 applications) were received. During this time the number of pre-planning enquiries in the County has also increased substantially.

Grants of planning permission during the first two years of implementation of the plan indicate a continued growth in development activity, complexity and in particular scale of development with 830 grants of planning permission in 2017 and 818 (including 12 Part VIII applications) in 2018 (to end of November).

Commencement notices received by the Council also reflect a continued growth in development activity in the County with 323 being received in 2017 and 359 received by the end of November 2018.

The Planning Authority has also dealt with numerous compliances with planning permission and the substantial volume of pre-planning enquires has continued with 295 new pre-planning enquiries logged during 2017 and a further 270 up to the end of November 2018.

20 estates were Taken in Charge in 2017 and during 2018 (to end of November) a further 25 estates were Taken in Charge by the Estates Team of the Planning Department.

### ***CDP2.1: Appropriate Assessment, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Strategic Flood Risk Assessment***

The Planning Authority received Natura Impact Statements (NIS)/Environmental Impact Assessment Reports (EIAR) which accompanied 15 planning applications between January 2017 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Full regard was given to the provisions of the Birds Directive and the Water Framework Directive in the assessment of all planning applications.

The Planning Department is in compliance with this objective and has secured this objective throughout 2017 and 2018.

## **Chapter 3 – Urban and Rural Settlement Strategy**

### ***CDP 3.1 Ennis***

The Ennis and Environs area is now included within Volume 3a - Ennis Municipal District Written Statement and Settlement Plans of this County Development Plan. Currently an Economic and Spatial Plan for Ennis entitled 'Ennis 2040' is under preparation and this is a Spatial and Economic Strategy for Ennis and Environs. Together with the County Development Plan, this will provide the framework through which the Council, coupled with ongoing collaboration with other departments and key stakeholders, will help to achieve the implementation of this objective.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 excellent progress has been made in relation to the delivery of quality public realm projects for Ennis and details in relation to these achievements are provided in later chapters of this progress report.

It is envisaged that upon completion of the Ennis 2040 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy these will help inform the planned Ennis and Environs Local Area Plan.

### ***CDP 3.2 Shannon***

This objective has been secured over the two year progress report timeframe. The Shannon Town and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was extended by Clare County Council on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017, and will remain in effect until 2023. As has been the case throughout 2017 and 2018, the Local Area Plan will continue to provide the framework through which the Council, coupled with ongoing collaboration with other departments and key stakeholders, will help to achieve the implementation of this objective.

Shannon is identified as being located within the Limerick Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan (MASP) and Clare County Council will continue to advocate for it to be promoted as a driver for regional prosperity within that context.

### ***CDP 3.3 Service Towns***

This objective is being implemented on an ongoing basis and having full regard to the detailed written statement and settlement plans for each of the Service Towns in the County.

### ***CDP 3.4 Small Towns***

### ***CDP 3.5 Large Villages***

### ***CDP 3.6 Small Villages***

The above objectives are being implemented on an ongoing basis.

In 2018 a successful pilot village study was undertaken by the Planning Authority for six small villages in an initiative to identify barriers to their growth and identify measures to assist in their revitalisation. Further detail on this initiative is included under CDP 16.7 Addressing Depopulation.

The Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region (RSES) advocate measures to strengthen and support rural settlements and upon adoption of the RSES the objectives of the County Development Plan 2017-2023 will be reviewed to ensure they are fully aligned with the RSES. Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP 3.7 Clusters***

This objective is being implemented on an on-going basis by the Development Management Process.

### ***CDP 3.8 Countryside***

Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP 3.9 Monitoring and Implementation of Settlement Strategy***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the urban and rural settlement strategy for the County has worked well as a measure to guide appropriate and balanced sustainable development into the towns and villages, whilst facilitating necessary development in the rural parts of the County, ensuring an appropriate balance between development, environmental protection and carrying capacity.

### ***CDP 3.10 Planned Growth of Settlements***

The provisions of CDP 3.10 have been implemented in full in the assessment of all housing applications throughout 2017 and 2018 and all permitted development proposals have provided for an appropriate level of growth within their respective settlements. Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP 3.11 New Single Houses in the Countryside within the 'Areas of Special Control'***

From 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018 (inclusive) there were a total of 257 grants of permission for dwellings within the 'Areas of Special Control' in the County. This compares to a total of 23 refusals of planning permission for dwellings over the same period within the Areas of Special Control. Of these refusals, only 11 included refusal reasons relating to settlement location policy. Other refusal reasons included site specific issues such as developments which would seriously injure the visual amenities of the area, public health issues and traffic safety.

### ***CDP 3.12 New Single Houses in the Countryside Outside the 'Areas of Special Control'.***

From 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, there were a total of 71 grants of permission for dwellings outside the 'Areas of Special Control' in the County. This compares to a total of zero refusals of planning permission for dwellings over the same period outside of the areas of special control. Clare County Council has granted over 250 houses in areas which are of Special Control since the implementation of this Plan.

### ***CDP 3.13 New Single Houses on Infill Sites in the Countryside***

From 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, there were a total of 6 grants of permission for dwellings on infill sites in the countryside. There were no refusals of planning permission

on infill sites development in the countryside over the same period. For infill sites in the countryside within the areas of special control, there is a relaxation of the local need criteria as outlined in CDP 3.11.

***CDP 3.14 Replacement of Substandard Habitable Houses in the Countryside***

From 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, there were a total of 6 grants of permission for replacement of substandard habitable houses in the countryside. There was 1 refusal over this period. Local need housing criteria does not apply to cases of replacement of substandard habitable houses in the countryside. This is an objective that has had a positive impact in terms of the reuse of existing buildings.

***CDP 3.15 Refurbishment of a Derelict Dwelling/Structure in the Countryside***

From 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, there were 7 grants of permission for refurbishment of a derelict structure in the countryside and no refusals over the same period.

***CDP 3.16 New Single Holiday Homes in the Countryside***

From 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017 to 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018, there were no applications for permission for new single holiday homes in the countryside. The objective regarding holiday homes is clear and unambiguous, i.e. not to permit new single holiday homes in the countryside.

Clare County Council remains committed to the implementation of all of the above objectives.

## Chapter 4 – Housing

### ***CDP4.1: Implementation of the Adopted Housing Strategy***

There is a requirement under section 95(3) of Planning and Development Act 2000 (as amended) for the CE to include in the 2 year review the progress achieved in implementing the Housing Strategy. The Joint Housing Strategy (JHS) for Clare Local Authorities and Limerick City and County Councils 2010-2017 was finalised in September 2010, taking account of the population targets assigned by the Mid-West Regional Authority and was adopted into the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 as Volume 7.

In terms of meeting the first key aim of the JHS, the number of households on Clare County Council's Social housing list (excluding those persons receiving any existing form of housing support) list fell by 138 households between 2017 and 2018 (from 1,304 in 2017 to 1,166 in November 2018)

As of November 2018, 1,341 households in County Clare are in receipt of the Housing Assistance Payment (HAP) Scheme, 256 households are in receipt of Rental Accommodation Scheme (RAS) support. In terms of properties that are currently leased to the Council for housing use, there are 157 long term leases and 114 short term leases.

Between January 2017 and the end of 2018, 235 units in total were put into use by Clare County Council as Social Housing (136 acquisitions and 99 new leases of properties). In this same timeframe, 77 tenants have been appointed to new voluntary housing units in County Clare.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 a number of Part 8 applications made by Clare County Council for social housing developments were approved by Clare County Council, as follows;

- The construction of 9 no. dwelling houses with access road, public lighting and all associated ancillary site development works at Knockbrack Lower, Clonlara.
- The development of 8 no. dwelling houses with access road, public lighting and associated ancillary site development works at Newpark Road, Roslevin, Ennis.
- The development of 51 residential units in Shannon.
- A development by Cuan an Chláir Housing Association Ltd which will consist of the refurbishment and conversion of existing farmyard buildings into 10 housing units at Cahercalla, Ennis, County Clare.
- The provision of 18 residential units and all associated site works at Sea View Park, Quilty.
- The construction of 13 dwelling units and associated works at Baurroe Feakle.

### ***CDP4.2: Facilitating the Housing Needs of the Population***

The Housing Section of Clare County Council has regard to the settlement strategy when considering lands for the provision of Social Housing.

As the Joint Housing Strategy for Clare and Limerick 2010-2017 is due to be reviewed after the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy is put in place, the Planning Department is committed to ensuring that this objective is carried over to the next Joint Housing Strategy. In terms of the prioritisation of the reuse of existing housing stock in the plan area, between Q1 of 2017 and Q4 of 2018, the Housing Section of Clare County Council has purchased 15

units under the 'Buy and Renew Scheme', which aims to support Local Authorities and Approved Housing Bodies to purchase and renew housing units and this shows good progress in terms of prioritising the reuse of existing housing stock in the plan area and meeting this requirement as set out in objective CDP 4.2.

#### ***CDP4.3: Living in Our Towns and Villages***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the Planning Department has encouraged the use of upper floor of commercial premises for residential purposes. The new Planning and Development (Amendment) (no. 2) Regulations 2018, provide that existing and vacant commercial buildings can be put back into use for residential purposes without the need for planning permission. This has introduced a positive form of exempted development and its use is encouraged by the Planning Department.

As previously referred to under CDP4.2, under the Buy and Renew Initiative, since Q1 of 2017, the Council has purchased 15 units for refurbishment within town centre locations and this shows the commitment of Clare County Council to achieving this objective.

During 2017, the Planning Department prepared a Clare 'Vacant Homes Strategy'. This report considered and analysed the census information which reported a vacancy rate of 19.6% in County Clare - higher than the national average of 12.3%. The conclusion of the report is that true vacancy in County Clare is significantly less than the reported figure at less than 10% and the significant number of holiday homes in County Clare are not taken into account, or the fact that the vacancy that exists is generally detached rural properties in areas of low housing demand. The council has commenced work to bring into stock vacant homes identified in the compilation of the Vacant Homes Strategy.

A Vacant Homes Action Plan for County Clare has been prepared. 80 houses have been surveyed to date in Ennis and Shannon. Work is ongoing with a view to maximising the number of vacant units that can be returned to use. When work in Ennis and Shannon is complete, attention will turn to Kilrush and Killaloe MDs area in 2019.

As part of the initiative 'Ennis 2040' the potential for the reuse of the upper floors of commercial buildings in Ennis is being examined and following on from recommendations that may emerge, the Economic directorate may take further actions and apply best practice across the settlements in the County.

#### ***CDP4.4: Sociable and Affordable Housing***

The provisions of Section 94(4) (c) of the Planning and development Act 2000 (as amended) have been complied with in full in the assessment of planning applications on lands that are zoned for residential use and in the assessment of planning applications for housing developments in 2017 and 2018.

Clare County Council is proactive in its approach in terms of acquiring lands/properties for social and affordable housing provision and the housing market in key settlements has been monitored throughout 2017 and 2018. Throughout 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council has actively sought out suitable lands in settlements for housing development and has

advertised in local newspapers and on local media in order to make landowners aware that lands were being sought for purchase.

The principles of lifelong adaptability have been incorporated into all of the Council's own social and affordable housing schemes in 2017 and 2018 and the principles of universal design have also been provided for.

Clare County Council has actively supported the work of Voluntary and Co-operative Housing Associations in the County, with an example of this being the application as was made by Clare County Council on behalf of Cuan An Chláir Housing Association Ltd for a substantial development at Cahercalla, Ennis. In 2018, 4 residential units in the Delginis residential area at Shannon were provided through an Approved Housing Body for a supported housing project for persons with a disability who are at risk of homelessness.

#### ***CDP4.5: Emergency Accommodation***

The provision of a homeless hub is a key priority for the Council. This will act as a bridge between emergency accommodation such as hotels and social housing for those most in need. The planned provision of a dedicated Homeless Action Team office in February 2019 will provide a single point of contact and deliver support to those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness or who have recently exited homelessness.

The Council has entered into an agreement with Novas Ireland who will operate the homeless hub and it is expected that the homeless hub will be operational by spring 2019. Throughout 2017 and 2018 Council has worked with Tusla, the HSE and the Prison Service to source accommodation for those exiting institutional care and to identify appropriate support for those cases and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

#### ***CDP4.6: Unfinished Developments and Taking in Charge***

Excellent progress has been made by the Planning Department in terms of working with developers to complete unfinished estates in the County. At the beginning of January 2017 there were 10 unfinished developments in County Clare that were on the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government's list of unfinished housing developments. Since the start of 2017, progress has been made on 7 of these estates and there are currently 3 remaining estates on the list. The Aisling Development at Shanaway Road, Ennis was nominated for an award under the Enhancing the Urban Environment category of the Local Government Awards in 2018.

During the time frame between January 2017 up to the end of 2018, 43 housing estates in County Clare have been taken in charge by the Estates Team in the Planning Department and this is substantial progress in terms of taking in charge of residential developments and meeting the objectives of CDP 4.6.

#### ***CDP4.7: Housing Mix***

The Planning Department requires that a Statement of Housing mix be submitted with all planning applications for multi residential developments in order to facilitate the proper evaluation of the proposal and to ensure that a good housing mix is provided for new developments.

In December 2018 guidelines entitled “Guidelines on Urban Development and Building Heights for Local Authorities” were published by the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government and these Guidelines set out new and updated national planning policy on building heights in relation to urban areas and it is envisaged that the implementation of these guidelines will have a positive impact in terms of housing mix in the larger settlements in County Clare. Clare County Council is committed to the continued implementation of this objective to 2023.

#### ***CDP4.8: Sites for Independent Development***

The Planning Department is committed to the preparation of a guidance document on the progression of sites for independent development during the lifetime of the County Development Plan. It is noted that Clare County Council has recently purchased an area of land in Ennis that could be suitable for a high quality scheme of sites for independent development.

#### ***CDP4.9: Traveller Accommodation***

The development of a housing scheme at Ballaghboy in Ennis has been an objective of successive Traveller Accommodation Plans. Plans are at an advanced stage to complete this project in summer of 2019. The vast majority of housing applications from members of the Traveller Community indicate a preference for standard Social Housing and are accommodated in the Social Housing Allocation Scheme. Clare County Council is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP4.10: Housing for Older People***

During 2017 and 2018 the development of housing for the elderly has been facilitated by the Development Management Team of the Planning Department and by the Housing Department. In 2018 the Planning Department granted permission for the construction of a 44 bedroom nursing home at O’Briensbridge, County Clare. In November 2018 permission was granted to construct an extension at the Lakes Nursing Home, Killaloe. These grants of permission serve to support the achievement of this objective.

#### ***CDP4.11: Accommodation for People with Disabilities***

In September 2018 Clare County Council approved the refurbishment and conversion of existing farmyard buildings into 10 housing units at Cahercalla, Ennis. The development will provide a day care centre and sheltered accommodation for persons with special needs. Clare County Council is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP4.12: Student Accommodation***

Since January 2017, Clare County Council has progressed proposals to designate the University of Limerick (UL) campus in County Clare and the hinterland of the campus as an economic Strategic Development Zone. In April 2018 the Elected Members and the Clare County Council Economic Development SPC supported the South Clare Economic Strategic Development Zone (SDZ) proposal, subject to designation. The provision of student accommodation will form an integral part of future detailed development proposals for the SDZ and when considered in conjunction with the route of the proposed Limerick Northern Distributor Road, will be in an excellent position in terms of the development of smarter

travel transport options to and from the university from the rural hinterland area and from the City of Limerick.

***CDP4.13: Holiday Homes***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and remains committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP4.14: Development Place Names***

During 2017 and 2018, the provisions of objective CDP4.14 are being met through the use of a planning condition on all grants of permission for housing developments, which provides that proposals for an estate/street name, house numbering scheme and associated signage shall be submitted to, and agreed in writing with, the Planning Authority prior to commencement of development, and the proposed name(s) shall be based on local historical or topographical features, or other alternatives acceptable to the planning authority.

The proposed place names as submitted have been agreed in the Planning Department in compliance with the policies of the Clare County Council Place names committee. This objective is in the interest of urban legibility and to ensure the use of locally appropriate place names for new residential areas.

***CDP4.15 Green Infrastructure in Residential Developments***

CDP 4.15 is being implemented on an ongoing basis through the development management function of the Planning Department and the development management process requires the provision of high quality public open spaces within housing developments. Clare County Council is in full compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP4.16: Radon***

CDP 4.16 is being implemented on an ongoing basis, having regard to the Building Regulations 1999 - Technical Guidance Document C and Clare County Council continues to have regard to best practice guidance in this area.

## **Chapter 5 – Community Development and Social Infrastructure**

### ***CDP5.1: Sustainable Communities***

The County Clare Local Economic and Community Plan 2016-2021 and the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026 support the creation of sustainable communities through the implementation of actions within the LECP and the delivery of innovative approaches to rural and community development. Various national and local funding schemes have assisted in realising much needed community projects in County Clare. These schemes include CLÁR, Town and Village Renewal, Community Enhancement Programme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Healthy Ireland Funding, Community Supports Scheme, Local Improvement Scheme etc that have been provided in 2017 and 2018.

### ***CDP5.2: Local Community Development Committee***

The Local Community Development Committee (LCDC) is comprised of Council Officials, Elected Members, and various business and community representatives. Among other things, LCDC oversees the community elements of the 6 year long Local Economic and Community Plan.

In the timeframe between January 2017 and December 2018, Clare County Council has actively supported the work of the Clare Local Community Development Committee in order to implement the Clare Local Economic Community Plan 2016-2021.

### ***CDP5.3: Voluntary and Community Groups***

The Clare Public Participation Network (PPN) is represented on the Strategic Policy Committees of Clare County Council, the Joint Policing Committee, and the Local Community Development Committee etc and actively engages at these forums.

### ***CDP5.4 Social Inclusion***

The Local Community Development Committee is responsible for managing the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme in County Clare. This programme is delivered by Clare Local Development Company and provides interventions to the target groups such as older persons, young people, the disabled, the traveller community, refugees and immigrants to advance their physical, social and cultural integration.

The Local Economic and Community Plan aims to address disadvantage and social exclusion through the delivery of agreed actions by key agencies.

In October 2018 a new Clare Age Friendly Strategy was launched. The Age Friendly Strategy targets supports to older people and is delivered on an inter-agency basis throughout County Clare. Clare County Council has a staff member identified as the 'Age Friendly Development Officer'.

The Traveller Accommodation Programme 2014-2018 remains in place with a new programme to be delivered in 2019. Both the current and the planned programme will address physical, social and cultural integration.

Clare County Council is satisfied that it is in compliance with this objective and is committed to its on-going implementation.

#### ***CDP5.5: Inclusivity***

Clare County Council actively promotes social inclusion by implementing best practice universal accessibility and design in all works to its buildings and facilities and through the design and construction of Council housing developments and through the development management process with regard to planning applications.

#### ***CDP5.6: Accessibility***

In order to encourage social inclusion by promoting and supporting the principles of universal design, Clare County Council has had an appointed Access Officer, based in the Planning Department, in place throughout 2017 and 2018 in order to assist customers with disabilities to access Clare County Councils services, buildings, and information.

Clare Local Authorities are committed to real consultation with and participation by people with disabilities in relation to accessibility matters and have established strong links with the P.W.D.I Clare (People with Disabilities in Ireland – Clare Branch Consultative Group) an umbrella organisation for the many organisations representing people with disabilities in Clare.

Clare County Council remains committed to the implementation of this objective and this objective is being implemented on an on-going basis.

#### ***CDP5.7: Age Friendly County***

In 2017 the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2017-2026 was published and the development of Age Friendly Communities is one of the 8 Pillars within this Strategy.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council has had an Age Friendly Development Officer in place in order to proactively support the implementation of the Clare Age Friendly Strategy 2018-2022. This Strategy addresses the opportunities and challenges posed by a predicted growth in the ageing population and builds on the foundations of the County's first Strategy in 2013.

During the last 2 years the Clare Age Friendly Programme has developed the following initiatives (amongst others) in order to work with developers, communities and relevant stakeholders to achieve accessible and age friendly amenities and facilities in Communities across the County:

- An Older People's Council to represent the voice of older people in Clare. Meetings have taken place between Clare County Council staff and representatives of the council to discuss relevant matters and to improve awareness and inclusivity.
- The Older People's Council has conducted a full walk ability study of Shannon Airport as part of the project to develop an Age Friendly Airport. A report has issued to Shannon Airport Authority who are looking to address some of the findings.
- Universal Design Housing & Public Realm training was delivered to Clare County Council Planners/Engineers/Technicians/Architects in September 2018.

- The Clare Bus Local Link rural bus service has developed over the last 2 years to improve connectivity in rural areas.
- Clare County Council has worked with Voluntary Housing Associations in the development and provision of Age Friendly Housing units.

The above details show clear progress in terms of the implementation of CDP5.7 of the County Development Plan 2017-2018 over the past two years.

#### ***CDP5.8: Community Facilities***

In 2017 and 2018 planning permission was granted for a total of 10 community facility developments, including the change of use of part of the Family Resource Centre at Bogbere Street, Ennistymon for use as a crèche and play area, and works to a former licensed premises at Newmarket on Fergus in order to provide for the development of units for food related start up businesses, a production kitchen for 'meals on wheels' and a training unit for certified hospitality courses.

Permission was also granted for the provision of playgrounds at Meelick and at Parteen and works to the Community and Family Resource Centre at Killaloe were permitted to allow for the provision of a community cafe, kitchen, youth centre and garden.

In order to encourage and facilitate community groups wishing to provide community facilities in their area and as per the Development Contribution Scheme of Clare County Council as was adopted in 2017, development by or on behalf of an organisation for community use is exempt from the requirement to pay development contributions.

#### ***CDP5.9 Community Gardens and Allotments***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the Council has been liaising with communities across the County in relation to allotments with regard to the relocation and enhancement of their allotment facilities.

#### ***CDP5.10: The Arts and Cultural Development***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 there was much activity in terms of the Arts in County Clare, in keeping with the spirit of CDP 5.10 of the CDP, including the following:

- Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann in 2017 was a cross directorate supported event.
- The Riches of Clare concert series held 21 concerts (5 throughout the county during the Fleadh).
- During 2017 almost 50 arts projects took place with disability organisations.
- A National Arts and Disability seminar was organised by Clare County Council in Ennis in October 2017.
- Almost 30 exhibitions in Kilkee, Scariff and Ennis, as well as professional development sessions for artists in the area of developing proposals were organised.
- The 'Culture Night' initiative as ran by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in September of 2017 and 2018 was well promoted in County Clare and a number of events were held in County Clare including at the Clare County Museum Ennis, at the De Valera Library Ennis, at St Flannans Cathedral Ennis and at Glór, Ennis.
- Clare County Council also supported an exhibition of Polish artists in the County Museum, Ennis in 2018.

#### ***CDP5.11: Physical Recreation and Active Living***

The Limerick and Clare Sports and Physical Recreation Strategy provides a framework for relevant stakeholders to work together to ensure the provision, management and use of quality facilities and services for everyone.

Throughout 2017 and 2018, there has been much activity in terms of promoting and providing for physical recreation and active living in County Clare, including the following (amongst others):

- A range of classes have been available at the Active Ennis Leisure Centre designed for specific groups in the community, such as elderly persons and adolescents.
- Specific Equipment to aid rehabilitation has been made available.
- Discount rates on Membership and Casual Usage to Golden Years customers.
- In 2017 the refurbishment of the gymnasium at Active Ennis Leisure Complex and the astro turf at Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road were completed.
- Funding secured in 2017 for three all-terrain wheelchairs, two of which will be based in the Lees Road facility and one in Active Kilrush Sports Complex.
- An Induction hearing loop system has been installed at the reception area of Active Ennis Leisure Complex for clients who are hard of hearing.
- The disabled parking spaces at Active Ennis Leisure complex and at Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park have been extended.
- Active Ennis is in the process of installing wheelchair accessible ramps at emergency exits around the Leisure Complex in Ennis and this is to be completed in 2018.

#### ***CDP5.12: Off-Road Walking and Cycling***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 Walking Trails at Active Ennis John O'Sullivan Park, Lees Road and walking tracks around pitch perimeter at Active Kilrush Sports Complex have all been refurbished.

The West Clare Railway Greenway has a project cost estimated at over €20m and progress in terms of this project is beginning with the project is now being managed by the Council's Project Management Office. Preliminary work continues, with funding applications recently being made under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund for the overall proposal of 88 km (from Ennis to Kilkee) with a separate application also being made under the Greenway Specific Call for a 23km proposal linking Kilrush and Kilkee. The outcome of these funding applications is not yet known.

#### ***CDP5.13: Countryside Recreation***

Clare County Council is committed to supporting rural diversification across the county and in particular supporting recreational potential in the open countryside.

#### ***CDP5.14: Public Rights of Way***

Clare County Council remains committed to the implementation of this objective to encourage the preservation of existing public rights of way within the Plan area.

#### ***CDP5.15: Playgrounds and Play Areas***

In 2018, €87,000 was allocated under the Community Supports Scheme for the benefit of existing community-run playgrounds located in County Clare to support playground maintenance costs, purchase and installation of special educational needs playground equipment as well as public liability insurance and annual certified safety inspection reports.

In addition, through the Limerick Hinterland Funding Scheme, funding has now been received for the provision of two playgrounds at Meelick Community Centre and the other on the site of Seanchóill, Parteen. This funding was awarded consequent to the Limerick Hinterland Study, which identified a gap in the provision of playgrounds in South East Clare.

Under the CLÁR funding scheme, 6 schools in County Clare received funding for play areas/multi-use games areas (MUGA's) in 2017 (Kilshanny NS, Broadford NS, Ballyea NS, Inis Cealtra NS, Lakyle NS & Connolly NS). In 2018, 7 Schools received funding for play areas/multi use games areas (Coore NS, Doolin NS, Dromindora NS, Labasheeda NS, Rineen NS, Lisdoonvarna NS & Tubber NS).

#### ***CDP5.16: Childcare Facilities***

Since January 2017, two permissions have been granted in relation to the provision of childcare facilities in County Clare, at Banefield, Killaloe and at Toberteascain, Ennis (which is currently on appeal to An Bord Pleanála). The Planning Department had regard to the provisions of the document: 'Childcare Facilities – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (2001)' in the assessment of these applications.

#### ***CDP5.17: Primary and Secondary Education***

In 2017 and 2018 a total of 20 planning applications for works or alterations to existing schools were permitted by the Planning Authority.

The Economic Development Directorate of the Council is working closely with the Department of Education and Skills to identify sites for primary school(s) in Ennis and for a new Gaelscoil in Kilrush. A site has been sold by the Council for the development of a permanent building for Gaelscoil Donnacha Rua in Shannon and it is envisaged that this will progress in 2019.

#### ***CDP5.18: Higher Education Institutes***

Discussions are at an advanced stage in late 2018 to increase the presence of the Limerick Institute of Technology in Ennis by the identification of a site/building appropriate to their needs and growing student population. The Economic Development Directorate of Clare County Council is actively supporting LIT to source an appropriate property solution in Ennis.

Progress has also been made in facilitating University of Limerick to have a presence in Ennis and to hold elements of their degree level training in the town. The Economic Development Directorate of Clare County Council has identified a property solution and is in the process of finalising this proposal.

### ***CDP5.19: Further Education and Adult Learning***

The Economic Development Directorate of the Council has provided encouragement and support to the Limerick Clare Education and Training Board who are extending their presence in Clonroad, Ennis.

The Local Enterprise Office of Clare County Council provides a wide range of high-quality training supports which are tailored to meet specific business requirements of Clare based enterprises. The supports provided include one-to-one mentoring, website development funding and advice to those considering setting up a new enterprise.

### ***CDP5.20: Dual Use Facilities***

Clare County Council is fully committed to the encouragement and promotion of shared use of school facilities with community groups where possible and will continue to promote the implementation of same where possible.

### ***CDP5.21: Health Services***

In terms of progress made in relation to Health Services, in 2017 the Planning Department of Clare County Council granted permission for two health care facilities in the County and throughout 2018 have assisted in terms of pre planning inquiries for additional facilities.

Permission was granted for a Community Primary Healthcare Centre in Killaloe. Permission was also granted for a change of use of an existing building to provide for a day services facility for people with disabilities/healthcare facility/consultation rooms with ancillary offices in Ennis.

In September 2018 permission was also granted for development which will consist of change of use of part of the existing WestPoint Building from Retail Warehouse use to Medical Services incorporating outpatient's facility.

In terms of progress made in relation to emergency services in County Clare, maintenance of all Fire Stations is carried out on an ongoing basis. Since January 2017 the following specific projects were progressed in the Fire Service in Clare:

- Ennistymon Fire Station – major refurbishment works completed in 2017
- Ennis Fire Station - replacement doors & windows & Kilrush Fire Station - training tower refurbishment completed in 2017.
- Killaloe Fire Station – roof refurbishment in 2018.
- Kilkee Fire Station – significant refurbishment and extension commenced in early 2018 & due for completion shortly.
- Ennis Fire Station – survey of existing Fire Station carried out
- Over the past 12 months progress has been made in providing a permanent location for Clare Civil Defence. Clare Civil Defence have been based in a leased premises for over 15 years. This new permanent location will allow for an enhancement of facilities available to Civil Defence, both in their operational role to the public, for the continuous training of the Civil Defence Volunteers and in housing their entire fleet within the confines of the building. A Part 8 Application was approved by Clare County Council earlier this

year. It is intended to go to tender shortly, and expected to have the works completed by Q3 of 2019.

#### ***CDP5.22: Air Ambulance Facilities***

Clare County Council is in complete compliance and remains committed to the implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP5.23: Libraries***

In January 2018, Kilrush library underwent a full refurbishment. This provides West Clare with two high standard library buildings (the other being Cultúrlann Sweeney which opened in 2012). In November, 2018 Clare County Council availed of Government grant aid for Information Communication Technology equipment which will enhance provision in the branch library network for the public throughout the county. A number of branches now offer Wi-Fi and Surf box facilities for the public.

In February 2018 Clare County Council approved a Part 8 application for the provision of an extension of the existing Glór Building at Causeway Link, Ennis in order to provide for a new public library, gallery space and associated office space as well as 97 additional car parking spaces. The County Library project in Ennis is advancing to stage 4 approvals with an anticipated start date in Q1 of 2019.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the libraries of County Clare have continued to provide for a wide range of valuable services including (amongst others):

- Healthy Ireland at your Library – a programme of events to educate the public on healthy lifestyle and health in general.
- ‘Work Matters’ – an initiative to support those seeking employment and supporting the information and research needs of locally based entrepreneurs, start ups and SME’s by facilitation and promotion of a range of services in the library.
- “Right to Read” is the governments programme to support literacy.
- The library service led the Local Authority response to the 1916/2016 Commemorations and in 2017 became the lead on the legacy programme of 1916 called “Creative Ireland”. This is a six year programme running from 2017-2022 which places creativity at the centre of public policy.
- Bliain na Gaeilge – the Library service led the Local Authority response to “Bliain na Gaeilge” in 2018 which consisted of a year- long programme of events in libraries throughout the county.

#### ***CDP5.24: Burial Grounds/Crematoria***

In 2017, 40 priming grants were paid to voluntary committees to assist them in the maintenance of burial grounds throughout the county and 39 priming grants were paid in 2018.

An additional grant totalling €8,000 was paid towards the development of Kildysart Burial Ground extension. In 2017, the Clare County Council also purchased lands at Kildysart Road, Ballaghafadda, Ennis to progress the development of a new public graveyard.

In October 2018 the Planning Department granted permission to extend the site boundary of the existing site in order to incorporate 25 additional car parking spaces together with ancillary site works at Shannon Crematorium.

Throughout 2018 the Economic Directorate have been working with the local community at Shannon as regard the cemetery at Illaunmanagh Shannon and the requirement for an extension to this. At present the Planning Department is preparing a variation to the Shannon Local Area Plan 2012-2018, as extended, in order to provide for zoning to accommodate an extension to this cemetery, in accordance with all relevant environmental legislation, and it is envisaged that this proposed variation will be put before the Council in 2019.

## Chapter 6 – Economic Development and Enterprise

### *CDP6.1: Economic Development and Enterprise*

Clare County Council and Local Enterprise Office Clare proactively engage with all relevant state agencies through various methods e.g. Action Plan For jobs, Mid West Regional Skills plus ad-hoc collaborative one-to-one meetings where deemed necessary. In 2017, enterprises supported by LEO Clare created 149 net jobs, ranking Clare in the top quartile for job creation.

As a measure to pursue sustainable enterprise and economic development in line with national and local policies, an Exploring Export Markets event was organised in light of Brexit and the potential impact to Irish SMEs. Local Enterprise Offices Clare, Limerick and Tipperary hosted a 'Beyond Local' event which focused on export opportunities in other key markets, namely Germany, France and the Nordics, which was attended by over 90 local businesses. Guest speakers from the emerging European markets, as well as exporting companies Design Pro Ltd., VigiTrust and EI Electronics were also in attendance.

Clare County Council in 2018 has inputted into the Draft RSES to promote economic development and enterprise in County Clare and will continue to do so in 2019 until the Southern Regional Assembly finalise the plan.

### *CDP6.2: Action Plan for Jobs: Mid-West Region*

Clare County Council and Local Enterprise Office Clare proactively engage directly and indirectly with all initiatives and actions incorporated in the Regional Action Plan for Jobs. This engagement is undertaken via participation in Regional initiatives where relevant and delivery of individual actions as set out in the APFJ. Of the 14 individual actions assigned to Clare, significant progress has been achieved in 13 of the actions with the other action being assessed as to potential. In December 2018 in collaboration with Minister Humphries Department Clare County Council in collaboration with other public and private agents is inputting to the Action Plan for Jobs to 2020.

From a Regional perspective, the Mid West achieved the following key milestones under the APFJ:

- 14.1% employment growth.
- Achieved 96% of the projected 2020 jobs target by 2017.
- Unemployment rate down to 6.6%, within 1% of the state average.

### *CDP 6.3: Development of Shannon*

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the Planning Department of Clare County Council has permitted a significant number of planning applications for commercial and enterprise developments at Shannon, including applications for works at Shannon International airport, for the development of a new hanger, works to the airport itself, new industrial units and offices at Drumgeely, modifications to the sky court shopping centre, and a development at Westpark Business campus to consist of offices and research and development space.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 there has been progress in terms of the provision of new jobs at Shannon. In 2017 41 new jobs were created at Shannon with the assistance of the Local

Enterprise Office Clare. Full figures for 2018 are not yet available however good progress has been made, for example, 14 new jobs were created by Core Optimisation at Shannon, Jaguar Landrover established a base in Shannon with an initial staff of 12 persons and plans to increase this to a staff of 150 and 'Stratos' established a base at Shannon with 6 employees.

Shannon is included within the new Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area in the Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region which reinforces its role as an economic driver for regional prosperity. Clare Council will continue to promote Shannon within this regional plan and intends in 2019 in conjunction with relevant stakeholders to prepare a streetscape plan for the town centre

Clare County Council continues to have on-going contacts with Shannon Commercial Properties with regard to developing Shannon's International Aviation business.

#### ***CDP6.4: Shannon International Airport***

The Shannon and Environs Local Area Plan 2012-2018, as extended (making of a new Plan deferred to 2023) includes detailed objectives for the Shannon Free Zone and zones substantial areas of land for future growth of the Shannon Free Zone, Westpark, Smithstown and also Shannon Town Centre.

The Draft Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy for the Southern Region and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Strategic Plan will address the role of Shannon International Airport at a regional level. Clare County Council is committed to supporting the future sustainable development of passenger and cargo traffic and expansion of Shannon International Airport and its continued role as a key driver of economic growth in the region.

Shannon International Airport has seen investment in the upgrade and transformation of customer facilities including retail, food and beverage. Planning permission was granted by the Planning Authority for a new aircraft maintenance hangar in 2017. 2018 has seen 5 new routes including Toronto, Providence, Stewart, Bristol and Liverpool and expanded services with Philadelphia and Alicante. 2018 also sees Shannon operate across 7 transatlantic destinations with 6 different carriers which is the largest in 17 years. Shannon International Airport Received Best Airport Marketing Award – Routes Europe in 2018.

The International Aviation Services Centre is tasked with developing a global aviation and aerospace industry cluster in Shannon and now has over 65 Aviation Companies providing over 2,600 jobs in the cluster which is the largest in Ireland. New companies and expansions in the past year include Jaguar Land Rover, Edward Life sciences, STA Ujet, Jetpower, AeroZone Distribution, Aerospace Asset Trading, GTS Robotics, Acclino Aviation Lean Training, InflightFlix, and Stratos

The N19 Shannon International Airport Access Road project is estimated at €15m and is ongoing and is now being managed by the Council's newly formed Project Management Office. The Dept of Transport (DTTAS) has recently confirmed that the Project Appraisal Plan is compliant with all the relevant guidelines and has confirmed that there will be a 2019 allocation to progress this scheme.

### ***CDP6.5: Economic Development in Ennis***

A proposed Variation No. 1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 is proposed to zone additional lands located adjacent to the M18 at Toureen on the eastern edge of Ennis to facilitate the future development of a Data Centre.

An Ennis Spatial and Economic Strategy – Ennis 2040 is currently being prepared which will build on the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and will take a longer term view to ensure that Ennis and its environs has a clear economic vision and sets an economic plan and framework to prosper and achieve this vision. The plan will be finalised in 2019.

An Enterprise Space Audit, which is being conducted by the Economic Directorate, is currently underway for Ennis under the Atlantic Economic Corridor Initiative and is due to be completed early 2019. This is a comprehensive detailed audit of all enterprise space within the town and environs of Ennis. Upon completion of the Enterprise Space Audit of Ennis this will then be rolled out to settlements with a population of over 2,000.

Opportunity Sites Masterplans are currently being finalised, for four key Ennis town centre Opportunity Sites – OP1 Former Boys National School site, Kilrush Road and OP9 Briar Lane/Harmony Row, both of which have the potential to incorporate employment generating activity including retail, commercial and third level educational uses. The third Masterplan is for OP4 and OP5 Post Office Field and Analogue Building which will facilitate the redevelopment of the Analogue Building and the development of a unique town centre amenity area within the centre of the town, significantly enhancing the town centre amenity, pedestrian connectivity and permeability. This work will inform the preparation of the Ennis 2040 Strategy.

The Planning Department, through Heritage Council funding, commissioned the preparation of a plan for the redesign of Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street as a key public realm space and a plan for the Regeneration of Lanes and Bow-Ways in the Medieval Core of Ennis. Both these projects were central to advocating for the recently allocated funding under the national Urban Regeneration and Development Fund and demonstrates the value of such plans for economic and physical development of the town and County. The funding allocation includes for the implementation of works set out in the study. Funding was also allocated for development of Parnell Street and High Street to develop as a Heritage and Cultural Quarter and for the re-design of O’Connell Square. The implementation of these projects will make a significant contribution to an enhanced public realm, quality of life to those who work and live in the town and to the future economic development of the town of Ennis.

### ***CDP6.6: Higher Education Institutes and the Knowledge Economy***

The strengthening of links with the University of Limerick and Limerick Institute of Technology in the provision of off-campus facilities within Ennis is being facilitated by the Economic Directorate in identifying potential opportunities for the development of an Ennis based third level education campus. One opportunity currently being progressed is the re-utilising and retrofitting of an existing building in the Quin Road Business Park for the Civil Defence Headquarters which will incorporate a flexible training centre, which will be used

collaboratively with University of Limerick (General Emergency Medical School- GEMS). This innovative concept is that the students' academic learning will be located in the Quin Road, together with the use of the Civil Defence facilities and equipment for the practical elements of the paramedics training and clinical placements for course participants. It is hoped that this collaboration with third level institutes will continue with County Clare having growth potential.

#### ***CDP6.7: University of Limerick – Clare Campus***

Currently there are in the region of 125 acres of land in South Clare designated as University Zone in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023. Building on this and working in partnership with University of Limerick, Clare County Council identified a unique opportunity to identify a 325 acre site adjacent to the University of Limerick as a Strategic Development Zone (SDZ). In April 2018 it was agreed by the Elected Members that the University of Limerick – Clare Campus (University Zone) should be formally proposed to be designated as a Strategic Development Zone to facilitate the development of a 'Town and Gown' environment which will provide a model of sustainable urban living, education and enterprise, building on the standards of the existing university campus. It is anticipated that an application will be made in 2018 for this SDZ designation by Clare County Council.

#### ***CDP6.8: Burlington***

The Planning Department is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP6.9: Shannon Estuary***

The Planning Department has been proactive in promoting and implementing the SIFP through a number of initiatives, the detail of which is included later in this report where specific objectives on the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary (Volume 7) are addressed.

Of note is the planned development of facilities at Cahercon which was recently successful in terms of an application for funding under the Government's Regional Enterprise Development Fund. €1,759,226 has been allocated for the carrying out of studies in relation to the development of the Clare Maritime Economic Zone at Cahiracon on the Shannon Estuary in order to re-purpose an existing site to provide maritime and cruise liner related training as well as serving as a testing ground for renewable technologies. Additional detail in this regard is provided at section CDP 11.2 of this progress report.

#### ***CDP6.10: Moneypoint Power Plant***

The ESB has a stated objective to be Carbon Neutral by 2035 and the Moneypoint generation and transmission infrastructure is expected to play a vital part in the energy transition. A meeting was held between Clare County Council and the Management of Moneypoint Power Plant in July 2018 to explore and maximise the opportunity of the existing operations at Moneypoint. Continued collaboration between the ESB and Clare County Council will be required in the coming years to address the diversification and continued contribution to the local and national economies of this plant. Clare County Council is committed to the continual implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP6.11: Research and Innovation***

The Planning Department received Enterprise Ireland – Regional Development Funding In 2017 to undertake a feasibility study in relation to the potential development of a Maritime Centre of Excellence at Cahiracon, County Clare.

In 2018 €1.8 million funding was awarded to Clare County Council by Enterprise Ireland for the development of the Clare Maritime Economic Zone at Cahiracon on the Shannon Estuary, where it is intended to re-purpose an existing site to provide maritime and cruise liner related training as well as serving as a testing ground for renewable technologies. It is intended that the facility will be operated by Clare County Council in partnership with Maritime Consultants and the National Maritime College of Ireland. This is a strategically important project in terms of national, regional and the local economic development, promoting the Shannon Estuary as a national and international destination for Marine Research and Development.

### ***CDP6.12: Clare Digital Hub Network***

Three digital hubs have now been established throughout the County – Kilrush, Miltown Malbay and Feakle. Two further facilities are planned for Ennistymon (works have commenced in December 2018) and Ennis.

Funding through the National Rural Regeneration Development Fund of €1,023,300 has recently been announced for a Multi-Service Innovation Centre in Ennistymon, facilitated through the conversion of an existing building on Parliament Street, comprising a Digital Hub with business broadband, family resource centre and community facilities which is due to open in late 2019.

It is anticipated that all 5 hubs will be operational by year end 2019. Clare County Council's Digital Hub Programme not only provides communities with access to broadband but it also provides the facilities to enable communities to exploit the potential of same. The services provided include Hot Desks, Meeting Rooms, and Full Audio Visual facilities etc with Hi Speed Wi-Fi Connectivity.

### ***CDP6.13: High Quality Development***

The Planning Department is progressing the implementation of the Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan with the completion of four key projects during 2018 including footpath and cycleway provision and improvements and new street lighting along Slí na Mara (funded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme), the Green Corridor (Limerick Hinterland Funding) and the Shannon Estuary Walk (Rural Recreation Fund). The development of a new Shannon Town Park (part-funded funded under ERDF) will progress to commencement of ground works early 2019. All these projects have made a significant contribution to sustainability, mobility and connectivity within the town and between the town and the Shannon Free Zone and Shannon International Airport, contributing to a high quality working and living environment with an overall positive impact on quality of life.

The Planning Department has, and continues to work with Shannon Commercial Properties to ensure the delivery of a sustainable, attractive and healthy working environment in their major overhaul of the Shannon Free Zone involving the demolition of redundant units and

their replacement with the construction of new units and also through the retro-fitting of existing units where possible. In line with this objective, the overall strategy places a major emphasis on high quality design within the Shannon Free Zone in order to attract new investment.

The Ennis public realm projects referred to earlier promote sustainable mobility through the development of strong town centre pedestrian connectivity and permeability contributing to an overall sense of health and well-being of the both the resident and working community. Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP6.14: Availability of Land and Infrastructure***

A total of 222 hectares of land has been zoned for Enterprise and a total of 341 hectares zoned for Industrial and Light Industrial uses in settlements throughout the county to facilitate economic development and investment. Lands are also zoned throughout the County for Commercial and Mixed Use uses. The Planning Department will continue to monitor zoned land availability for the remaining life of the CDP to ensure that County Clare is able to support and attract economic development. The proposed Variation (1) to the County Development has been initiated in order to provide for the development of a data centre campus this demonstrates the Councils commitment to ensuring that the nature, extent and location of zoning facilitates the provision of economic development in the County.

#### ***CDP6.15: Re-use of Brownfield Sites***

The new Digihubs in Feakle, Miltown Malbay and Ennistymon that have been developed or are planned to be developed throughout the county have involved the re-use and/or redevelopment of old or disused building stock. Throughout 2017 and 2018 work has been progressed in terms of the preparation of master plans for the development of a number of Brownfield sites in Ennis that have been identified as 'Opportunity Sites' in the CDP.

In 2018 the Vacant Sites Register has been amended to include a number of sites, in line with statutory procedures.

#### ***CDP6.16: Ancillary Services***

Clare County Council are committed to supporting the provision of small scale ancillary services in large industrial and business parks, for example planning permission was granted and Starbucks developed and opened in Shannon in 2018. Clare County Council is committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP6.17: Energy Supply***

The electricity market is becoming increasingly de-centralised, facilitating the possibility of local or community energy generators and consumers. The Renewable Electricity Supply Scheme (RESS) details were published in 2018, and this scheme will actively encourage local community energy generation companies. The Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme was published in 2018 and this scheme incentivises small scale heat generation from local energy crops and forest thinning. Clare County Council has received a number of enquiries in relation to community scale projects of this nature.

Solar power schemes at a large commercial scale and community scale have increased significantly in the past two years with planning applications approved for in excess of 30MW. Since the 25<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 6 applications for solar farms have been received, 4 of which have received planning permission (1 currently on appeal and 1 current on further information). Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP6.18: Green Technology***

Clare County Council is conscious of meeting the increasing energy efficiency standards associated with the building regulations, particularly the introduction the Near Zero Energy Performance standards. The market for smart building controls and electric vehicle infrastructure is expected to grow significantly over the next two years, building on the development of broadband and electric vehicle purchase. Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP6.19: Agricultural Developments***

Clare County Council is committed to supporting Agricultural diversification across the county.

#### ***CDP6.20: Rural Enterprises***

Clare County Council and in particular the Local Enterprise Office Clare has and will continue to support new and existing small scale rural enterprises.

#### ***CDP6.21: The Food Industry***

Clare County Council will support initiatives to support the expansion of the food industry in Ireland such as the Burren Food Trail which offers both a food and cultural experience. The LEO office ran Primary Courses in Food Safety in 2017 and 2018. This course has been designed and developed by the Environmental Health Officers Association of Ireland which focuses on requirements in relation to food under EC regulations. Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP6.22: The Craft Industry***

The Local Enterprise Office of Clare runs a mentoring programme where 6 hours of one-to-one mentoring with a professional business consultant in the area of business in which help if required is made available. In 2018 courses were also run on Preparing for Trade Shows in order to up-skill companies on sales conversions and to teach the skills and tools to approach prospective customers before, during and after the show.

#### ***CDP6.23: Home Based Economic Activity***

Clare County Council continues to support home based economic activity especially through the development management process.

#### ***CDP6.24: The Film Industry***

Clare County Council will continue to promote the county as a destination for the film making industry. The Planning Department in 2018 as part of the European Year of Culture was involved in the Heritage Council Funded film made to showcase the practices of Transhumance as practiced in the Burren in comparison with the traditional practices

carried out in Austria. This is part of two films made with Austria, the other featuring the stonewall building in the Aran Islands.

***CDP6.25: Retail Development***

Retail development is dealt with under Chapter 7, please refer for more detail.

***CDP6.26: Tourism***

Tourism is dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 9 – please refer to same for more information.

## **Chapter 7 – Retail**

### ***CDP7.1: Retail Strategy***

Currently Volume 8 of the Clare County Development Plan consists of the Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region 2010-2016. It is anticipated that following the finalisation of the RSES by the Southern Regional Assembly in 2019 Clare County Council may need to prepare a new strategy in conjunction with the other local authorities in the Mid West Region. Clare County Council remains committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP7.2: Retail Activity***

Location for retail is aligned with the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy of the County Development Plan. There is approximately 295 hectares zoned Mixed Use with the vast majority of these zoned lands being located within village and town centres and neighbourhoods throughout the County to facilitate retail development, with an additional approximate 160 hectares of land zoned Commercial which can further provide for retail development. Clare County Council will continue to monitor land availability and is committed to the implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP7.3: Ennis Town Centre Retail Offer***

In 2017 the Planning Department took part in a Heritage Council Town Centre Health Check pilot project which involved a shopper opinion survey and a business owner/manager opinion survey. The data was evaluated and presented in the 'Ennis Town Centre Health Check Report' providing a valuable insight into the attributes of shoppers and business owners in the town centre and what their views are in relation to a range of issues relating to the town centre. This report was produced and distributed to all premises within the town centre of Ennis and provides valuable information which can be factored into the development of town centre initiatives. An up-to-date Town Centre Health Check has recently been completed for 2018 and the results will be available shortly. This builds on similar town centre health checks over the last 5 years and allows an evidenced based approach to the assessment of the vitality of Ennis Town and retail offer.

In 2017 Ennis was named Ireland's friendliest place, based on Retail Ireland's Excellence Awards. This award aims to mark the significant contribution being made by retailers, city and county councils in driving standards Ennis was chosen based on county councils and local enterprise offices nominating their towns. This award is a positive indication as to the environment and retail offering in Ennis.

A series of town centre public realm enhancement projects have been initiated by the Planning Department which include preparation of plans for the re-design of Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street, the regeneration of the town centre lanes and bow-ways, the enhancement Parnell Street. In terms of the town centre Public realm projects/strategy – progress is being made on implementation following on from the awarding of the Urban Regeneration Development Fund, which has been discussed in previous chapters.

Ennis 2040 previously referred to will also be examining the existing retail offering within the Town Centre and looking at how this can be built upon. It is anticipated that this economic and spatial plan will assist in identifying areas where future expansion could be considered.

#### ***CDP7.4: Neighbourhood Centres in Ennis***

Planning applications for developments at two neighbourhood centre locations in Ennis (at the Kilrush road and at Toberceascain Ennis) were assessed by the Planning Department in 2017 and 2018. One of these locations (Kilrush Road) was refused permission by An Bord Pleanala on appeal and the second is has been granted by Clare County Council and is currently on appeal to An Bord Pleanala.

The Planning Department will consider the implications for Neighbourhood Centres in Ennis and if necessary will address any matters arising either within an Ennis and Environs Local Area Plan or at the next County Development Plan stage.

#### ***CDP7.5: Shannon Town Centre***

Funding has been secured in 2018 through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund to progress a study for the Shannon Town area. The scope and extent of this plan will need to be finalised in consultation to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government but will include a Streetscape Strategy for the Town Centre.

#### ***CDP7.6: Service Towns***

Clare County Council is committed to supporting retail services and convenience offering in its Service towns. Since January 2017 a significant additional retail offering was the opening of Aldi in Ennistymon in April 2017.

#### ***CDP7.7: Small Towns***

Since January 2017 significant additions to the retail offering in our Small Towns include the opening of Aldi in Ennistymon and Killaloe. Clare County Council remains committed to supporting small towns across the county in maintaining and improving their retail offering.

#### ***CDP7.8: Large Villages***

Clare County Council is committed to encouraging and facilitating retail development where deemed appropriate and to retaining the existing retail facilities in these villages.

#### ***CDP7.9: Small Villages***

Clare County Council is committed to encouraging and facilitating retail development where deemed appropriate and to retaining the existing retail facilities in these villages.

#### ***CDP7.10: Retail uses in Rural Areas***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective whereby farm shops can be facilitated where deemed appropriate.

#### ***CDP7.11: Over-Concentration of Uses***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP7.12: Town Centre Accessibility and Mobility***

All the public realm enhancement plans and opportunity site master plans previously referred to have been undertaken by the Planning Department and are based on the principles of universal access and improving mobility through the use of shared surfaces which will assist in pedestrian permeability and connectivity in Ennis town centre.

In 2018 the Planning Department has commenced work on plans to improve the public realm area of Frances St, in Kilrush Town. The concept will be to provide a plan that if implemented will greatly improve mobility and accessibility.

#### ***CDP7.13: Retail Health Checks***

An Ennis Town Centre Health Check is undertaken annually. In 2017 a very detailed survey was undertaken as part of a pilot health check and was part funded by The Heritage Council. This involved the carrying out of customer and retailer survey questionnaires, the results of which were presented in a comprehensive brochure produced by the Planning Department which was circulated to all the businesses in Ennis. The 2018 Town Centre Health Check has been completed and will be circulated in the coming months. The annual Retail Health Checks provide a valuable means of recording trends over time in relation to town centre retail uses, including vacant units.

#### ***CDP7.14: Shop Fronts***

Through the development management process and having regard to designated Architectural Conservation Areas the Planning Department is continuously proactive in promoting the use/protection and enhancement of traditional shop fronts where appropriate.

#### ***CDP7.15: Evening and Late Night Uses***

Ennis continues to retain its Purple Flag accreditation for 2019. To achieve that Clare County Council continuously engages with variety of stakeholders on a working group which address matters relevant to achieving a safe, vibrant and well-managed town centre between 5pm and 5am.

#### ***CDP7.16: Leisure and Entertainment Facilities***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and remains committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP7.17: Edge-of-Centre Retail Development***

Please refer to earlier comments relating to the provision of retail development in the towns and villages across the county.

#### ***CDP7.18: Retail Park/Retail Warehousing***

Clare County Council is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Ennis 2040 may identify opportunities both in terms of scope for specific retail offerings and also strategic site locations that could be considered to facilitate retail parks and retail warehousing.

***CDP7.19: Tourism-Related Retail***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and remains committed to the on-going implementation of this objective and to the promotion of the tourism attractions themselves.

***CDP7.20: Ancillary Retailing***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and remains committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP7.21: Petrol Filling Stations***

Clare County Council is in compliance with and remains committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

## Chapter 8 – Physical Infrastructure, Environment and Energy

### *CDP8.1: Mid-West Area Strategic Plan*

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of MWASP, which is a non-statutory, 20-year, integrated land-use and transport strategy for the mid west region looking to 2030. However it is anticipated that following on from the finalisation of the RSES by the Southern Regional Assembly in 2019 a review of the MWASP may occur.

### *CDP8.2: Motorways and National Roads*

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. The M18 Motorway from Gort to Tuam was officially opened in September 2017. Through the development management process and the work of the Design Office, Transport Infrastructure Irelands design standards have been applied.

### *CDP8.3: Service and Rest Areas*

In June 2017 an Application for a Service Area at Junction 12 was withdrawn. In July 2018 a new planning application for the development of a motorway service area and rest area and associated works, adjacent to Junction 12 on lands zoned for commercial purposes was submitted to the Planning Authority. A request for further information was made and the Planning Authority are awaiting a response currently. Clare County Council remains committed to the implementation of this objective.

### *CDP8.4: Direct Access onto National Roads*

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective which is implemented by the development management process.

### *CDP8.5: Development of Strategic Regional Roads*

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through its development management process and the work of the Road Design Office.

### *CDP8.6: Proposed Projects identified for Future Developments*

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

**Limerick Northern Distributor Road (Phase 2)** –The project team recently met with the Dept of Transport, Tourism and Sport (DTTaS) and progress is being made in moving the project to the next stage of the approval process.

**Killaloe Bridge and By-Pass** – In 2017 and 2018 the Planning Department together with the Physical Directorate prepared Planning reports on arbitration issues and this stage is on-going.

**Ennistymon Inner Relief Road & Bridge Crossing (Blakes Corner)** – Planning consent for an inner relief road and new bridge crossing was given by the elected members in 2018.

**N19 Shannon Airport Access Road** –In 2018 Clare County Council prepared a project appraisal plan and it has been confirmed that there will be a funding allocation in 2019 to progress this project.

**N85 Kilnamona Realignment Scheme** – The detailed design is being progressed by Clare County Council currently.

**Proposed Link from Lahinch Road (N85) to Drumcliff Road (L4182):** In 2018 this project is being progressed as a Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) scheme.

#### ***CDP8.7: Environmental Considerations in Road Construction Projects***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Throughout 2017 and 2018, for all major road construction projects, the route selection process has been informed by a constraints study and environmental considerations. Appropriate Assessment Screenings are carried out for all projects including bridge rehabilitation.

#### ***CDP8.8: Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets (DMURS)***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Throughout 2017 and 2018 the requirements and recommendations as contained in the Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets have been implemented in the preparation of all design schemes and their implementation and through the development management process.

#### ***CDP8.9: Shannon International Airport***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Full regard has been had to the designated Red Zones and Public Safety Zones in the Environs of Shannon International Airport in terms of all pre planning inquiries and the assessment of all planning applications within this area throughout 2017 and 2018 and all submission as received from the Irish Aviation Authority have been given due consideration. Throughout 2017 and 2018 the Development Management Team in the Planning Department have assessed a number of applications for permission at Shannon International Airport that will serve to safeguard current and future operational and development requirements at the airport. Please refer to Vol 3 (b) for additional information. Through the pre planning process the Development Management Team of the Planning Department continue to work with Shannon International Airport in a collaborative manner on an ongoing basis.

#### ***CDP8.10: Smarter Travel***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. As part of 'Low Cost Safety Schemes' in Co. Clare in 2017 and 2018, improvements to pedestrian and cyclist facilities have been developed including a pedestrian crossing near St Aidan's NS, Shannon in 2017, which has improved access to the nearby School. Other examples include the cyclist facilities from St Flannans College to Kilrush Road which are part of the Low Cost Safety Scheme to be completed in 2018 and early 2019. In assessing planning applications for new schools, for example in Ennistymon, measures to encourage walking and cycling were incorporated by

the Planning Authority to include the use of school mobility management plans, bike parking, direct pedestrian routes, etc.

#### ***CDP8.11: Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans***

It is anticipated that Ennis 2040 will have a high level view on Urban Mobility in Ennis Town. Following on from the finalisation of that plan this objective will be reviewed to best consider measures required to ensure compliance. Clare County Council is committed to the ongoing implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.12: Active Travel Towns***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in compliance with and is committed to the on-going implementation of Active Travel Plans in the Ennis area, The Ennis Active Travel Town scheme funded by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport was implemented in Ennis in 2016 and actions arising are being implemented.

#### ***CDP8.13: Walking and Cycling***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Numerous schemes of works in keeping with this objective have taken place in villages throughout the county, including (amongst others)

- The Road Design Office has assessed a 300km section of Euro Velo Route following the Atlantic Coast and is working with the European Cyclists Federation and Sport Ireland on completion of a report in relation to this route.
- The West Clare Railway Greenway project is ongoing (as referred to elsewhere in this progress report).
- During 2018 the Road Design Office designed cycle lanes both on and off road sections from St Flannans College to Kilrush Road and works on these cycle lands are currently underway.
- A Pavement Overlay was carried out in Moher on the R478 for approximately 1.5k. This road, forms part of the Tour De Burren Cycle route and other large cycle routes.
- Improvement works have been carried out to footpaths in Lahinch, Ennistymon, Doolin, Ballyvaughan, Lisdoonvarna & Inagh in 2017 and 2018
- A pavement overlay was provided in Kilmurray McMahon on the R485 for approx 2.5km in 2018 on part of the Estuary Cycle Route.
- Improvement works have been carried out to walkways at a number of locations in West Clare, namely East End/Burns Cove Kilkee, Cliff Walk West End Kilkee and Bridges of Ross
- Improvement works have been carried out to footpaths in Kilkee Strand Line, Ballynacally, Lissycasey, Kilrush (on-going), Cooraclare, Cross and Doonbeg in 2017 and 2018.

- Following on from the development of the Green Infrastructure Plan by the Planning Department, upgrade works to the Shannon Estuary trails was provided under the “Recreational Funding” scheme in 2017.
- Walkways have been developed over the past two years to link Tuamgraney and Ogonnelloe, further Outdoor Recreation and Infrastructure Scheme funding has been committed to develop a further 5km of this trail.
- Footpath improvements have been carried out in O’Callaghans Mills, Tuamgraney, Kilkishen, Whitegate and Mountshannon. New and enhanced crossing points have been incorporated in each of these projects.

#### ***CDP8.14: Rail Network***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. In November 2018 the Joint Committee on Rural and Community Development discussed the reoccurring problem of flooding on the Galway to Limerick Rail line at Ballycar and representatives from Clare County Council were in attendance at this meeting.

#### ***CDP8.15: Shannon Rail***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.16: Bus Services***

A new bus shelter was installed at Lahinch in 2017. Throughout 2018 there have been ongoing discussions in terms of a proposed new bus stop/shelter for the village of Inagh. Currently plans are progressing for a bus shelter location for Crusheen Kilkee and Kilrush. Throughout 2018 discussions have been ongoing as regards the provision of a bus service for Ennis and the National Transport Authority is currently examining its potential. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.17: Integrated Transport Services***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.18: Public Rights of Way***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.19: Water-Bourne Transport***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council are working with consultants on the preparation of a master plan for the Doolin Pier Area and public consultation on same was held in 2017. A draft of the Master plan was made available in June 2017. In September 2018 a Category 2 application for funding was made by the

Planning Department under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund for a Doolin Pier Visitor Centre, to date this application has not been successful.

#### ***CDP 8.20 Directional Signage***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. In summer 2018 signage was installed at Kilrush and Cappa in order to advertise Scattery Island as a Tourist attraction. In 2018 the Planning Department prepared a signage plan for Kilrush Town and Cappa village. Signs and interpretation Panels have been procured for the Shannon Estuary Way in conjunction with Failte Ireland, working with Limerick City & County Council to advertise the estuary Route from Tarbert to Killimer via road through Limerick and Clare. It is expected that these signs will be in place by February 2019 this builds on the Heritage Council Funded projects delivered by the Planning Department at these locations. Improved directional signage has been installed for the villages of Mountshannon, and Ballinruan and new signage has been ordered for Tulla. Signage to direct visitors to Holy Island in East Clare has also been erected. Signage has been installed to advertise Burren Geopark at various locations around North Clare. Doolin Cycling Hub Signage was completed in 2018. At present the West Clare Municipal District Office is working with Failte Ireland in relation to providing new Signage for a new Burren Drive.

#### ***CDP8.21: Water Framework Directive***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. In 2017 and 2018 investigations were carried out on a number of water bodies to assess compliance with Water Framework Directive objectives. Staff from the Environment Section also worked with the EPA on desk based assessments to assist in identifying pressures responsible for placing water bodies in the county at risk of failing to achieve WFD objectives. The current River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 is now in place and the full provisions of this are being implemented in County Clare.

#### ***CDP8.22: Protection of Water Resources***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.23: Water Abstraction from Lough Derg***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.24: Water Services***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council continues to work closely with Irish Water across various work areas.

#### ***CDP8.25: Water Supply***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. A number of Mains Rehabilitation Works (Find and Fix ongoing programme) through Irish Waters Contractors have been ongoing in

County Clare throughout 2017 and 2018 including between Millstream Estate and Convent Hill, Killaloe, at Abbey Street Killaloe, at Highfield Park Ennis, at Bridgetown and at Knockanamina, Clarecastle

#### ***CDP8.26: Ennis and Environs Water Supply***

The Ennis Water Mains Rehabilitation Contract, which was part of the Ennis Water Conservation Strategy, provided for the replacement of 17Km of old cement and cast iron water mains throughout the greater Ennis Area with approximately 12Km of new water mains. The contract was completed in August 2017. This in conjunction with water conservation and find and fix resulted in an overall reduction of water consumption within the Ennis Area of 20%. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP8.27: Waste Water Treatment and Disposal***

Throughout 2017 and 2018, thirty waste water treatment plants in the County were monitored. Numerous public sewerage treatment system projects have been progressed in County Clare in the past two years, including the following projects:

- Clonroadmore Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade was completed in November 2017.
- Shannon Town Waste water treatment plant Intake Works Contract: The scope of this project is to provide for new inlet works and numerous other upgrades to the Shannon waste water treatment plant.
- Kilfenora waste water treatment plant was designed in 2018 and is at Planning Stage at present.
- Quin Waste Water Treatment Plant, the tender stage of this project has been completed in 2018
- Throughout 2017 and 2018 progress has been made in terms of progressing Clare County Councils Current Investment Programme 2017-2021
- Progress had made in relation to Clare UTAS (Untreated Agglomeration Studies) Projects(project period 2017-2021) throughout 2017 and 2018, as follows:
  - Kilrush Sewerage Scheme- Detailed design is nearly completed and it is expected that a planning submission will be made in early 2019.
  - Clarecastle Sewerage Scheme- Detailed design for this project is nearly completed.
  - Liscannor Sewerage Scheme- detailed design for this development is nearly completed. And is it expected to that a planning submission will be made in early 2019.
  - Ballyvaughan Sewerage Scheme- Detailed design for this project is nearly completed and it is expected that a planning submission will be made in early 2019.
  - Kilkee Sewerage Scheme- An Environmental Impact Assessment Report is likely to be required for this project.

#### ***CDP8.28: Waste Management***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Wide-ranging environmental awareness programmes were promoted in 2017 and 2018 focusing on a number of target groups including community groups, businesses, dog owners and schools. In 2018 Clare County Council adopted new Waste Management Bye-Laws following a public consultation process and meets the requirements of the Regional Waste Management Plan.

In accordance with the Regional Waste Management Plan, thirty four waste prevention projects were undertaken by voluntary groups across Co. Clare in 2017 and 2018 through funding provided under Clare County Councils Waste Prevention Grant Scheme. Examples of projects include Plastic Free Communities; community led reusable cup and bottle projects and up cycling and repair workshops.

Resource efficiency in terms of waste, water, and energy was promoted as part of the greening programme for Fleadh Cheoil na hEireann 2017 where 44 businesses signed up to the Green Fleadh business programme. Clare County Council has actively participated in National Reuse Month in 2017 and 2018 in association with Community Reuse Network Ireland (CRNI) (In accordance with the Southern Region Waste Management Plan) and the Southern Region Waste Management Office through the provision of up-cycling workshops and awareness stands.

#### ***CDP8.29: Waste Transfer and Recovery Facilities***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council currently authorises a total of 34 privately operated waste facilities within the County (in addition to a number of small number of EPA licensed waste facilities). At present Clare County Council operates 5 Civic Amenity Centres and 51 bring backs.

#### ***CDP8.30: Litter Management***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. In 2018 the Environment Section initiated the preparation of a litter management plan for the county and this is currently at the non-statutory consultation phase of preparation. The provisions of the current Clare County litter plan (2015-2018) continue to be implemented.

#### ***CDP8.31: Construction and Demolition Waste***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council currently authorises two privately operated waste facilities within the county which specifically cater for the treatment and recovery/recycling of construction and demolition wastes.

#### ***CDP8.32: Agricultural Waste***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective, through the development management process and through the work of the Environment Section.

#### ***CDP8.33: Noise Pollution***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Councils Noise Action Plan 2018 was adopted by the elected members in July 2018 and its provisions are being implemented through the development management process.

#### ***CDP8.34: Air Pollution***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP8.35: Light Pollution***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP8.36: SEVESO III Directive***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. The Planning Authority liaises with the Health and Safety Authority on planning applications and queries where the requirements of the SEVESO III Directive apply.

***CDP8.37: Energy Security***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP8.38: Electricity Networks***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Regard has been had to the Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2017-2023 and to the Clare Wind Energy Strategy in particular.

***CDP8.39: Gas Networks***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP8.40: Renewable Energy***

Clare County Council and the Limerick Clare Energy Agency are committed to continued implementation of this objective.

***CDP8.41: Energy Storage***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP8.42: Energy Conservation and Efficiency***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council is working toward the ISO 50001 energy management standard. To date the local authority has increased its own energy efficiency by 17.5%.

***CDP8.43: Broadband Connectivity***

In 2018 Clare County Council have appointed a Broadband Officer. The role of the Broadband Officer is to work with the Department of Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources to ensure the prompt implementation of the Rural Broadband Scheme in County Clare. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP 8.44: Telecommunications Infrastructure***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective

## **Chapter 9 – Tourism**

### ***CDP9.1: Strategic Plan for Tourism***

Clare County Council in partnership with Shannon Heritage is leading the preparation of a ten year tourism strategy for the county. It is envisaged that the process will conclude in July 2019. Clare County Council is in compliance with and remains committed to the implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP9.2: Promotion of Tourism in County Clare***

In 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council supported the work of 'Clare Tourism' in their marketing and promotion role and produced branded brochures, attended trade shows e.g. Holiday World (Dublin and Limerick), Milwaukee Irish Fest, placed adverts in various media and worked with tourism groups and the main agencies with the aim of promoting Clare as a destination of choice. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP9.3: Integrated Tourism Products***

The Council supports the tourism trade by working with Clare Tourism and also engaging with tourism interests such as the Burren Ecotourism Network, Loop Head Tourism, Lough Derg Marketing Group etc. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP9.4: Tourism Developments and Tourist Facilities***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

### ***CDP9.5: Tourist Accommodation***

The Planning Department has assessed numerous planning applications for both small scale and larger scale tourism accommodation related developments in 2017 and 2018 including the provisions of two floating holiday pods at the Marina in Kilrush, the refurbishment of the former Shannon Shamrock Hotel at Bunratty and an extension to Hotel Doolin. These proposals are positive in terms of the use of existing developed land and buildings for tourism accommodation. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP9.6: Wild Atlantic Way***

In 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council continued to support Fáilte Ireland in the development of the Wild Atlantic Way brand. The Planning Department made submissions on the drafting of the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy to the Southern Regional Assembly promoting County Clare attractions and products on the Wild Atlantic Way. The Heritage Council through the Planning Department funded projects on the Shannon Estuary Way to promote this as an off shoot to the Wild Atlantic Way. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.7: Business Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.8: Activity and Adventure Tourism***

The development of the Lough Derg Blueway and the Lough Derg Canoe Trail are significant products which have been developed further in 2017 and in 2018. The focus of County Clare's presence at Holiday World in January 2019 will be on Adventure Tourism. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.9: Educational Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.10: Rural Tourism and Forestry Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.11: Arts, Crafts and Food Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.12: Coastal Tourism***

In May of 2017 Clare County Council gave consent for works at the promenade in Lahinch. Throughout 2018 the proposed works have gone to tender and works are scheduled to commence in February 2019. In February 2018 Clare County Council gave consent for an upgrade and extension to the public toilets in Lahinch, works have commenced and are scheduled to open in May 2019.

Nine beaches in County Clare achieved blue flag status in 2017 and in 2018 including Cappa Kilrush, Fanore, Kilkee, Lahinch, Spanish Point, Whitestrand Doonbeg, and Whitestrand Miltown Malbay. The international blue flag symbolises high standards in water quality, safety and services as well as environmental management, information and education. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.13: Lakeland and Waterways Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.14: Urban Tourism***

This objective is being implemented by Clare County Council on an ongoing basis through the use of national funding schemes (Town and Village, Rural Regeneration, Urban Regeneration, Outdoor Recreation, CLÁR etc) and local funding scheme (Community Supports Scheme) which facilitates improvements to the public realm in towns and villages throughout the county.

In addition the Economic Directorate during 2018 has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the findings and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue-print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation.

In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages.

#### ***CDP9.15: Festivals and Events***

The national Fleadh Cheoil na hÉireann was held in Ennis in the Summers of 2016 and 2017. The Planning Department facilitated this through the processing of the Events Licenses for the Fleadh. The small festival and events funding previously administered by Failte Ireland is now being managed by Clare County Council since 2018. Clare Tourism, supported by Clare County Council, prepares an annual Clare Festivals and Events Guide for the County. A Festival and Events Co-ordinator was appointed in July 2017. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.16: Heritage and Cultural Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.17: Sustainable Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.18: Niche Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.19: Accessible Tourism***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.20: Signage Management***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.21: Tourism in Ennis and its Environs***

This objective is being progressed on an ongoing basis through a number of initiatives such as the development of public realm projects in Ennis (See Volume 3 (a)) and the carrying out of a Town Centre Health Check for Ennis in 2017 and 2018. In 2017 and 2018 the Town of Ennis retained its Purple Flag accreditation and received the title of Irelands Friendliest Town. Ennis 2040 will examine the role Ennis has and what it can build on in the coming years to promote Ennis as a tourist destination.

#### ***CDP9.22: Tourism in South Clare***

Please refer to Volume 3(b) for detail on Shannon International Airport. In 2017 plans for the development of a Shannon Estuary Way were announced by the Minister for Tourism and Sport, which is the first in what is hoped to be a series of drives which will be developed by Fáilte Ireland in collaboration with local stakeholders to encourage visitors to discover the variety of inland visitor experiences as they travel along the Wild Atlantic Way. In 2018 the Heritage Council funded 2 projects through the Planning Department on the Shannon Estuary Way. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.23: Tourism in East Clare***

In July 2017 the Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan for Holy Island as was commissioned by the Planning Department was published. The visitor management plan brings together the relevant stakeholders to implement the recommendations and objectives set out, in the pursuit of developing Inis Cealtra into a successful tourism destination while having due regard to the environmental and cultural sensitivities of the island. Please refer to earlier comments regarding progress made regarding the Lough Derg Canoe Trail and the provision of footpaths and walking trails linking Killaloe to Scariff.

Throughout 2018 the Planning Department has prepared Pilot Village Study's of 6 villages in Clare, including 3 in East Clare- Whitegate, Broadford and Flagmount. The Pilot Village Studies identify and highlight the potential for tourism development in each of the villages.

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.24: Tourism in North Clare and the Burren***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council approved two Local Authority own developments for works to the existing car parks and coach park at the Cliffs of Moher in order to maintain and improve upon the facilities offered. The Planning Department has also permitted a number of applications for permission to enhance established attractions in the towns and villages of north Clare, including (amongst others) the construction of an extension to Hotel Doolin, alterations to a number of premises in Lahinch, including

'Randaddys' restaurant and a building formerly known as 'Irish House', and works to the Burren Smokehouse at Lisdoonvarna to provide for a heritage centre space.

Please refer to previous comments relating to progress made at Doolin.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 numerous events and activities took place at the Geopark, in the Burren including the following:

- The Burren and Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geopark hosted 150 representatives from 70 European Geoparks. The 3 day event culminated in a tour of the Burren and Cliffs of Moher.
- An Interreg Atlantic Area partnership with 11 other Geoparks launched the Atlantic Geoparks Project. This project will develop a tourism route of Geoparks along the Atlantic in Ireland, UK, France, Spain and Portugal.
- The Geopark hosted official delegations from Japan, Finland and Hong Kong, looking at best practice in the Geopark.
- Four additional Geopark Trails in Doolin, Killinaboy, Cahercomaun/Cusack Centre and Fanore were launched during Heritage Week, which was co-ordinated by the Planning Department.
- The Geopark LIFE programme continued to support the development of the Burren Ecotourism Network and developed on-line tools for sustainable tourism as follows:  
(a)The Heritage Map Viewer - a one stop shop Geographical Information System (GIS) for tourism and conservation datasets, reports and research for planners and managers.  
(b)The Heritage Sites and Monitoring App - allows site managers to monitor and survey trails and sites, collate data and produce reports.
- The Geopark hosted the final conference of the LIFE programme and launched the final reports summarising the outputs of a 5 year partnership between agencies, businesses and community groups.
- Social Media following has increased to 4,100 on facebook and 3,300 on twitter. A quarterly newsletter is produced on line and circulated to 500 readers.

#### ***CDP9.25: Tourism in West Clare***

In 2018 the Planning Department developed a Visitor Signage Plan for Kilrush and Cappa with an emphasis on clear way finding to the various tourist related attractions in Cappa and Kilrush. A public consultation event in relation to this signage plan was held in March 2018 and the final plan will be available in early 2019. The Planning Department is currently procuring Design Consultancy services in relation to the provision of a Cappa Enhancement Strategy. It is the Planning Departments intention to commence this Strategy in the first quarter of 2019.

Throughout 2018 the Planning Department has prepared Pilot Village Study's of 6 villages in Clare, including 3 in West Clare-Carrigaholt, Cooraclare and Mullagh. The Pilot Village Studies identify and highlight the potential for tourism development in each of the villages.

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.26: West Clare Railway***

The development of a greenway for pedestrians and cyclists using the old West Clare Railway is on-going.

In 2018 funding applications were made under the Rural Regeneration Development fund for the overall proposal of 88 km (Ennis to Kilkee) with a separate application also being made under the Greenway Specific Call for a 23km proposal linking Kilrush and Kilkee. The outcome of these applications for funding is not yet known. Please refer to Chapter 8 for additional detail on progress made. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP9.27: Tourism and the Islands***

Please refer to earlier progress comments relating to:

- Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan for Holy Island
- Signage for Kilrush and Cappa
- The Kilrush Signage Plan

## **Chapter 10 – Rural Development and Natural Resources**

### ***CDP10.1: Rural Economic Development***

Clare's Rural Development Strategy 2026 - "*Realising Clare's Rural Potential, Our Life, Our Home*" was launched in September 2017 and provides a focus for energising Ireland's Rural Economy.

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the Clare Local Development Company (CLDC) and 'Future Analytics Consulting Limited' have been working with business interests in the towns of Kilrush, Ennistymon and Scariff in the formation of Town Teams for these towns and the creation and implementation of their socio-economic town development plans. In 2017 LEADER funding of €141,000 from the Department of Rural and Community Development was secured towards the creation of the development of a Town Team training programme for each town.

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP10.2: Rural Enterprise***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Please refer to previous progress comments relating to the Food Industry training provided by LEO throughout 2017 and 2018. The pre-planning and Development Management functions of the Planning Department have also supported and encouraged rural enterprises in 2017 and 2018.

### ***CDP10.3: Agri-Food Sector***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP10.4: Rural Services***

Please refer to previous progress comments relating to the provision in 2018 of Digital Hubs across the County and also the Multi-Service Centre currently under construction in Ennistymon. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP10.5: Rural Transport***

In 2017 and 2018 work has been ongoing on a 'Rural Uber' initiative for the County in order to facilitate car-pooling and community bus services and to enable people in remote rural areas to get to their local towns and villages and in March 2018 Clare County Council called for companies to submit proposals/solutions for a planned "Rural Uber" system to address transport shortages and isolation in Clare. In 2018 Enterprise Ireland awarded €25,000 to Clare County Council towards a feasibility study into the possibility of implementing a Rural Uber system in the County. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP10.6: Broadband***

In 2018 Clare County Council appointed a Broadband Officer. The role of the Broadband Officer is to work with the Department of Communications, Climate Change and Natural Resources to ensure the prompt implementation of the Rural Broadband Scheme in County Clare. The Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026 was launched in 2017 and highlights the provision of Broadband and Digital services as one of the eight central pillars of the Rural Development Strategy. As previously mentioned Digital Hubs were opened in Kilrush, Feakle and Miltown Malbay on Friday 2nd March 2018 and a further hub is under construction in Ennistymon.

#### ***CDP10.7: Natural Resources***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP10.8: Non-Commercial Fishing***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP10.9: Forestry***

This objective has been implemented on an ongoing basis by the Development Management Team through their assessment of forestry related planning applications and their commenting on applications for Forestry Licences, and Felling Licences, which are determined by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. In 2017 the Planning Department commented on 73 Forestry Licence applications and dealt with 65 forest road and entrance planning applications. In 2018 the Planning Department commented on 136 Forestry Licence applications and dealt with 64 forest road and entrance planning applications. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP10.10: Bioenergy***

Throughout 2017 and 2018, Clare County Council and the Limerick Clare Energy Agency have been working closely with the Clare Local Development Company to advance the work of the Clare Wood Energy Project. Clare County Council has developed a forest management plan for its own biomass resources and has just completed a second harvesting cycle that will produce wood fuel capable of heating Áras Contae an Chláir. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP10.11: Renewable Energy Development***

Throughout 2017 and 2018 Wind energy projects as permitted by earlier grants of planning permission have been developed in West Clare and the capacity of an electricity substation on the Tulla Road at Ennis has been increased to facilitate renewable energy generation in West Clare. Throughout 2017 and 2018 planning applications for six Solar Farms have been submitted to and assessed by the Planning Department, five of which have been granted and further information has been sought on the sixth application. At this stage of the plan

Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP10.12: Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction***

There has not been any application for such developments in County Clare, and at this stage of the plan Clare County Council is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective, requiring a precautionary approach

***CDP10.13: Minerals, Mining and Quarrying***

Clare County Council is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

## Chapter 11 – Shannon Estuary

Please also note that Volume 7 of the Clare County Development Plan consists of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary

### *CDP11.1: Integrated Development of the Shannon Estuary*

The implementation of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan for the Shannon Estuary (Volume 7 of this County Development Plan), is being progressed on an on-going basis through the established Steering Group tasked with fulfilling this objective.

### *CDP11.2: Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary*

The SIFP is a major inter-jurisdictional land and marine based framework to guide the future development and management of the Shannon Estuary. In May 2017 representatives of the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan Steering Group attended the “Nor Shipping” event in Oslo, Norway. This event was a key opportunity by the state agencies working to implement the Government’s Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland “Harnessing our Ocean Wealth Strategy” (HOOW). Nor Shipping was a 4 day event at which the SIFP had a stand on the Ireland Pavilion. Clare County Council recognised this as a key opportunity to promote the Shannon Estuary and in particular the zoned deep water marine related industry sites on the northern shore of the Shannon Estuary. As a result the Shannon Estuary has established a prominent profile at an international level which will be explored and developed further through sustained follow up with the agency relationships established at Nor Shipping – all of which have resources present in many countries across the globe.

As a follow on, representatives from the Planning Department attended SeaFest, Ireland’s national maritime festival, which took place in Galway in 2017 and 2018. SeaFest is part of Harnessing our Ocean Wealth: An Integrated Marine Plan for Ireland (HOOW), and its goal is to increase participation and engagement with the sea. Clare County Council attended the Our Ocean Wealth Summit and the Digital Ocean Conference and provided a stand at the Marine Trade Show, held follow up meetings with key contacts established at Nor Shipping which further enhance linkages and establish opportunities for the Shannon Estuary.

Representatives of the Council spoke at a Tidal Energy workshop at the University of Limerick (UL) in relation to the potential of the Shannon Estuary, to accommodate a tidal test device or site in the future. In addition, the Planning Department also participated in a Marine Technology and Renewable Energy Research Day in the University of Limerick in conjunction with the UL MaREI team, Shannon Foynes Port Company and ESB projects. The focus of this is to drive the potential for investment into County Clare and the shores of the Shannon Estuary.

The Planning Department were invited to speak at an EPA facilitated workshop at the Loughs Agency in Derry in relation to the potential of applying the IMMERSE (Integrated Management and Monitoring of Estuarine and Coastal Ecosystems) to the Shannon Estuary and other estuaries around Ireland. The Planning Department presented the work to date on the implementation of the SIFP for the Shannon Estuary.

The Bird Usage Survey of the entire Shannon Estuary commenced in 2017 and the interim report was completed in November 2017 which outlines the results to date from the first six months of surveys for the estuary. It was presented to the SIFP Steering Group on 30th November 2017. The work was also presented at the 7th Ornithological Conference held in the National University of Ireland, Cork on 25th November through the preparation of a poster presentation. Work is continuing in terms of finalising the Bird Usage Study.

Under the Government's Regional Enterprise Development Fund, €1,759,226 has been allocated for the carrying out of studies in relation to the development of the Clare Maritime Economic Zone at Cahiracon on the Shannon Estuary in order to re-purpose an existing site to provide maritime and cruise liner related training as well as serving as a testing ground for renewable technologies. The development proposal will include the development of classrooms and training facilities for the cruise liner industry, along with the development of a field research centre. This would involve LIT and GMIT providing a testing ground for technologies. Clare County Council in partnership with Maritime Consultants and the National Maritime College of Ireland, will lead this strategically important project. There is significant potential for high regional impact and the project proposes to leverage an existing asset on the Shannon Estuary and the reopening and repurposing of the educational use at this site

#### ***CDP11.3: Marine-Related Industry/Large-Scale Industry on the Estuary***

Please refer to the commentary on CDP11.2 above. In addition the Planning Department has made submissions to the drafting of the RSES by the Southern Regional Assembly highlighting the unique resource the deep water ports in the Shannon Estuary and also identifying the strategic importance of Moneypoint. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP11.4: Strategic Development Locations***

Please refer to the previous comments above regarding progress made at Cahiracon and also those relating to Moneypoint. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP11.5: Strategic Development Location A – Inishmurry/Cahiracon***

Please refer to details in terms of Cahiracon as provided at CDP 11.2.

#### ***CDP11.6: Strategic Development Location B – Moneypoint***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP11.7: Shipping and Navigation***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.8: Harnessing the Energy Resources of the Shannon Estuary***

The Shannon Integrated Framework Plan has identified 4 areas where tidal energy generation is possible. While tidal energy generation has not yet been commercially developed, a Tidal Energy Test site was identified near Cahiracon on the Clare side of the estuary and a Foreshore License was submitted to the Department. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.9: Promoting Tourism, Recreation and Leisure around the Shannon Estuary***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.10: Cruise Ship Industry***

Please refer to details in terms of Cahiracon as provided at CDP11.2. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.11: Estuary Settlements***

Please see previous progress comments regarding Heritage Council funding made available in 2018 through the Planning Department to local communities for 2 projects to build on their unique location on the Shannon Estuary. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.12: Aviation and the Shannon Estuary***

Please refer to Volume 3 (b) and previous progress comments. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.13: Commercial Fishing/Aquaculture***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP11.14: Building on the Shannon Estuary as an Environmental Asset***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP 11.15 Marina Developments***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

## **Chapter 12 – Marine and Coastal Zone Management**

### ***CDP 12.1: Environmental Designations in Coastal Areas***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP 12.2: Management Structures***

The above objectives are implemented on an on-going basis through the Development Management Function of the Planning Department. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP 12.3: Maritime Spatial Planning***

The Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government has prepared a National Marine Planning Framework – Baseline Report, which is the first formal dialogue and a major step towards the preparation of a Marine Spatial Plan for Ireland. The purpose of the Baseline Report is to set out the context in which the Marine Spatial Plan is being developed and help to identify the key issues marine planning will need to address. The Planning Department is engaging in the stakeholder consultation process and has made a submission on this document. Once finalised, the Marine Planning Framework will inform the preparation of a Marine Spatial Plan at regional and local levels.

### ***CDP12.4: Integrated Coastal Zone Management***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP12.5: Off-Shore Gas and Petroleum Resources***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP12.6: Off-Shore Renewable Energy Development***

Tidal energy devices are being developed by a number of companies in the west of Ireland. A national tidal energy test site is proposed on the Clare coast of the Shannon Estuary, with the support of academic, industry and government agencies. The tidal test site will be developed over the next two years. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP12.7: The Fishing Industry***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP12.8: Aquaculture***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.9: Shellfish Waters Directive***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.10: Ports, Jetties, Harbours, Quays and Piers***

Please refer to CDP8.19 and CDP9.24 for details as to the preparation of a Master plan for the Doolin Pier area. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.11: Marina Developments in Coastal Areas***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.12: Coastal Erosion and Flooding***

Clare County Council is engaged in a programme of coastal remediation works in 2017 and 2018 on works including repair and reconstruction works to sea walls, revetments, roads, piers and tourism infrastructure at several locations around the entire county coastline. An example of such works included consent being given for repair and strengthening of coastal defence measures at the promenade in Lahinch in May 2017. Throughout 2018 the proposed works have gone to tender and works are scheduled to commence in February 2019. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.13: Coastal Squeeze***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.14: Protection of Beaches and Sand Dunes***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP12.15: EU Bathing Water Directive***

Nine beaches in the County achieved blue flag status in 2017 and in 2018 including Ballycuggeran, Cappa, Kilrush, Fanore, Kilkee, Lahinch, Mountshannon, Spanish Point, Whitestrand, Doonbeg, and Whitestrand, Miltown Malbay. The international blue flag symbolises high standards in water quality, safety and services as well as environmental management, information and education. The Irish Green Coast Award was awarded to beaches at Bishops Quarter at Ballyvaughan and Seafield, Quilty in both 2017 and 2018.

#### ***CDP12.16: Island Development***

Clare County Council is supportive of tourism related initiatives for Scattery Island and in summer of 2018 the West Clare Municipal District Office erected a number of signs at Kilrush and Cappa to guide tourists to the passenger ferry for Scattery Island. In 2018 the Company 'Scattery Island Tours' secured a new 70 passenger ship for its daily trips to Scattery Islands and this has led to increased capacity in terms of passenger numbers visiting the Island.

In July 2017 the Inis Cealtra Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan was finalised and published and this plan was commissioned by the Planning Department of Clare County Council.

In 2018 signs to advise tourists where tours to Holy Island in East Clare could be accessed were erected in Mountshannon by the Killaloe Municipal District Area office.

## Chapter 13 – Landscape

### ***CDP13.1: Landscape Character Assessment***

The Council remains committed to utilising the landscape character assessment of County Clare and other relevant policy and guidelines in respect of the management promotion and enhancement of landscapes in County Clare. The Planning Department was represented at presentations provided at the Landscape Forum Ireland ‘National landscape Forum 2018-Irelands Water Scapes’ which was held at Killaloe in May 2018.

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will continue to be done through the development management and plan making processes.

### ***CDP13.2: Settled Landscape***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

### ***CDP13.3: Western Corridor Working Landscape***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

### ***CDP13.4: Shannon Estuary Working Landscape***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

### ***CDP13.5: Heritage Landscapes***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

### ***CDP13.6: Seascape Character Areas***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

### ***CDP13.7: Scenic Routes***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

## **Chapter 14 – Biodiversity, Natural Heritage and Green Infrastructure**

### ***CDP14.1: Biodiversity***

The National Biodiversity Plan was published by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht in 2017 and informed the preparation of the Clare Heritage Plan and Clare Biodiversity Plan. The Clare Heritage Plan 2017-2023 and the Clare Biodiversity Plan 2017-2023 were produced by the Planning Department in 2017. National Biodiversity week ran in May 2017 and 2018 and was supported by Clare County Council.

### ***CDP14.2: European Sites***

This objective is implemented on an on-going basis. All planning applications submitted to the Planning Authority, as the competent authority, are screened for Appropriate Assessment. Notification of any new or modified European designated sites are included into the Planning Department's ArcGIS mapping system to ensure a current, comprehensive environmental baseline database is maintained. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP14.3: Requirement for Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Directive***

The provisions of Article 6(3) and where necessary Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive are implemented in order to ensure that Appropriate Assessment is carried out where necessary and full regard is has to the document "Appropriate Assessment of Plans and projects in Ireland-Guidelines for Planning Authorities 2009". At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP14.4: Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs)***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Continued compliance will be achieved through the pre-planning and development management process. All new, proposed or modified NHA's are identified and updated on the Planning Departments ARC GIS database.

### ***CDP14.5: County Geological Sites***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council has a geologist staff member who can assist in ensuring continued compliance and progress under this objective.

### ***CDP14.6: Burren National Park, Wildlife Sanctuaries and Nature Reserves***

In 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council made submissions on the Burren Management Plan which is being prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Services. A cross departmental working group has been established to liaise with the NPWS to progress this management plan. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP14.7: Non-Designated Sites***

As part of the SEA process for the drafting of the CDP zoned sites which require habitat mapping at project stage where identified and zoning objectives associated with same were

incorporated into the CDP. Plan or project level proposals on these or other sites deemed necessary are subject to Habitat Mapping. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.8: Natural Heritage and Infrastructure Schemes***

The Planning Department has been available to provide advice and assistance as required at a cross directorate level to ensure protection of the natural heritage when carrying out works. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.9: Environmental Impact Assessment***

2018 saw the introduction of a number of changes in terms of EIA legislation. In September 2018 the provisions of the European Union (Planning and Development (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2018) came into effect and a number of key amendments came into effect including (amongst others):

- Reduced administrative burdens, through the use of joint or coordinated procedures when Appropriate Assessment is required;
- The broadening of environmental factors to be considered in the assessment – population and human health, resource efficiency, climate change, biodiversity and disaster prevention;
- Strengthened screening procedures to determine whether EIA is required in respect of development consent proposals;
- Expansion of the information to be contained in the re-titled Environmental Impact Assessment Report (EIAR).

As a result of the new EIA legislations, updated Guidelines for planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out environmental impact assessments were published by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in August 2018. The Guidelines replace previous Guidelines for Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála on carrying out environmental impact assessment published in March 2013, and planning authorities and An Bord Pleanála are required to have regard to them in determining planning applications and appeals and Clare County Council now has regard to these guidelines.

The Planning and Development (Amendment) Act, 2018 was signed into law on 19<sup>th</sup> July, 2018. Of particular note is an amendment to the extension of duration of permissions under Section 42 of the Principal Act which has come into operation and which requires that in the event of an application to extend the duration of a permission where substantial works have been carried out, the Planning Authority must be satisfied that an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) or Appropriate Assessment (AA) or both was, or were not required, before the permission was granted.

The Planning Department has had full regard to the above changes in EIA/ AA legislation and guidance.

#### ***CDP14.10: Contaminated Land***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be reinforced through the pre-planning and the development management process.

#### ***CDP14.11: Habitat Protection***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

#### ***CDP14.12: Urban Ecology***

It is anticipated that Ennis 2040 will reflect on the urban ecology of Ennis Town and any recommendations will be considered for inclusion in the subsequent Ennis and Environs Local Area Plan. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.13: Habitat Fragmentation***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

#### ***CDP14.14: Inland Waterways and River Corridors***

During 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council have met with the OPW and Waterways Ireland The Planning Department and Ennis MD staff have been involved in reviewing proposals from the OPW regarding the Flood Protection Measures to take place at Briar Lane Ennis in 2019. At this stage of the County Development Plan, Clare County Council is in compliance with the above objects and seeks to implements these objectives on an ongoing basis.

#### ***CDP14.15: Freshwater Pearl Mussels***

The implementation of this objective is on-going and to support its effective implementation Fresh Water Pearl Mussel survey training was organised for Clare County Council and local National Parks and Wildlife Staff on the Doonbeg River in May 2017.

#### ***CDP14.16: Peatlands***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.17: Woodlands, Trees and Hedgerows***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process as wells as through the work of the Heritage Officer.

#### ***CDP14.18: Grasslands***

Habitat Mapping is carried out as required on sites across the County. Please see previous progress comments above with regard to habitat mapping. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.19: Wetlands***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. This will be done through the pre-planning and development management process.

#### ***CDP14.20: The Burren National Park***

In 2017 and 2018 Clare County Council made submissions on the Burren Management Plan which is being prepared by the National Parks and Wildlife Services. A cross departmental working group has been established to liaise with the NPWS to progress this management plan. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.21: Limestone Habitats***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.22: Burren and Cliffs of Moher Geopark***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.23: World Heritage Site Status***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.24: Development Proposals in Designated World Heritage Sites***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP14.25: Dark Sky Reserve Designation***

At this stage of the County Development Plan, Clare County Council is in compliance with the above objects and seeks to implement these objectives on an ongoing basis.

#### ***CDP14.26: Alien and Invasive Species***

Clare County Council ran a training programme on Invasive Species in 2017. In 2018 a Management Strategy for the control of Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) in the Riverwater catchment (including Errina Canal) in County Clare was prepared and a site specific Management Plan for Tobermurragh and Banes Field in Killaloe was also prepared which identified the location and treated the invasive species on site.

#### ***CDP14.27: Green Infrastructure***

Elements of the Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan were implemented during 2017 and 2018 through various funding sources received for the development of the Shannon Town Park, Shannon Estuary Looped Walks, and Slí na Mara. In addition, the Green Infrastructure Plan has lent support to local communities to seek funding to undertake conservation works at the Shannon Town Wetlands. Implementation of the Shannon Green Infrastructure Plan is on-going with the completion of three projects during 2018

The Shannon Town Park Scheme is central to the layout of Shannon and the project will support the physical enhancement of the town. In April 2017 Clare County Council approved plans for the redevelopment of this park and associated works. A detailed urban design scheme was then prepared by Consultants in 2018 and contractors are about to be appointed to undertake this project works commencing in early 2019.

## **Chapter 15 – Architectural, Archaeological and Cultural Heritage**

### ***CDP15.1: Architectural Heritage***

Over the last two years, through the assistance of available grant schemes including the Built Heritage Investment Scheme, the Structures at Risk Scheme, the Traditional Form Buildings Grant Scheme, the Follies Trust Grant and the Irish Georgian Society's Grant Scheme, over 60 Protected Structures and Buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) have been repaired and brought back into use.

### ***CDP15.2: Protected Structures***

There are 882 Protected Structures within the County as listed in Volume 4 Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023. Since the Development Plan was adopted there were 30 valid planning applications relating to Protected Structures in the County. All planning applications for works or alterations to or near Protected Structures have been reviewed by the Conservation Officer of the Planning Department. Furthermore over 60 Section 57 Declarations have been issued relating to Protected Structures. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP15.3: Industrial Heritage***

Works to over ten historic road bridges, piers, harbours and light houses have been carried out by Clare County Council, Transport Infrastructure Ireland, Commissioners of Irish lights etc. with the assistance and support of the Planning Department. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP15.4: Vernacular Heritage***

The Planning Department has endeavoured to ensure that all works, repairs and extensions to vernacular buildings in the County are carried out in a sympathetic fashion using appropriate design and materials. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management and Conservation functions of the Planning Department.

### ***CDP15.5: Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs)***

There are 35 Architectural Conservation Areas in the County designated in the Development Plan. The Planning Authority continues through the development management process to implement the conservation objectives for these areas. Over the past two years, over 50 building repairs and town and village enhancement schemes have been undertaken in the County. The Planning Department has ensured that such works have not adversely affected the character of Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) and that grants for buildings in ACAs have been used to the full for that purpose.

### ***CDP15.6: Protected Species and Proposed Works to Buildings***

In assessing planning applications, Section 57 Declarations and all other consent procedures, the Planning Authority are cognisant of the potential impacts on protected species. All planning applications are screened for potential impacts on European Sites and are referred

to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht where required. In addition applicants are advised of the requirements for protecting species, in particular Bat species, when carrying out works under Section 57 declarations. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

***CDP15.7: Maintenance and Improvement of Architectural Heritage***

Refer to CDP15.5 Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) progress response above.

***CDP15.8: Sites, Features and Objects of Archaeological Interest***

Since 2016 the Conservation Officer, with the assistance of the Graveyard Section of the Rural Development Directorate has carried out two archaeological excavations at Carran and Noughaval (Kilfenora) and major repairs to six ruined mediaeval churches in cemeteries in the County, including Ballysheen, Feenagh, Templemaley, Carran, Noughaval and Kiltenanlea, to reduce public risk and preserve the rich archaeological and ecclesiastical heritage of our historic graveyards. The projects have been grant aided by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Culture and the Gaeltacht, the Burren Geopark and Clare County Council.

***CDP15.9: Newly Discovered Archaeological Sites***

Archaeological sites and discoveries brought to the attention of Clare County Council are notified to the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and published on the website [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie). At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.10: Zones of Archaeological Potential***

Under planning legislation, all developments proposed in or near archaeological sites, identified on [www.archaeology.ie](http://www.archaeology.ie) require archaeological assessment or investigation. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

***CDP15.11: Archaeology and Infrastructure Schemes***

All planning applications which have a potential impact on archaeological sites are referred to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht for their observations. In addition any day to day works undertaken by the Council are screened for potential archaeological impacts prior to works commencing. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.12: Raising Archaeological Awareness***

In 2017 and 2018 The Conservation Officer gave a number of talks including those run as Heritage Week events on archaeology and built heritage throughout the County. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

***CDP15.13: Underwater Archaeology***

Clare County Council, in conjunction with the Marcos Project “Spanish Point” are supporting efforts to locate the wreck of the Armada Ships. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.14: Cultural Development***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.15: Museums and Heritage Sites***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.16: Genealogy***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.17: Oidreacht Theanga/Linguistic Heritage***

Clare County Council offers a Bilingual service and staff are available to assist as required. Official publications are translated into Irish such as the Draft County Development Plan 2017-2023. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP15.18: Folklore and Oral cultural Heritage***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

## Chapter 16 – Towns and Villages

### *CDP16.1: Town Centre Vibrancy*

In 2017 the Planning Department took part in a Heritage Council Town Centre Health Check pilot project which involved a shopper opinion survey and a business owner/manager opinion survey. The data was evaluated and presented in the 'Ennis Town Centre Health Check Report' providing a valuable insight into the attributes of shoppers and business owners in the town centre and what their views are in relation to a range of issues relating to the town centre. This report was produced and distributed to all premises within the town centre of Ennis and provides valuable information which can be factored into the development of town centre initiatives. An up-to-date Town Centre Health Check has recently been completed for 2018 and the results will be available shortly.

The Economic Directorate is currently carrying out a vacant enterprise space audit of Ennis, as an initiative under the Atlantic Economic Corridor, and it is anticipated that this will be carried out for other towns in the County.

Vacant Dwellings in County Clare was produced by the Planning Department in 2017 based on the 2016 Census and identifies and evaluates the key trends in vacant dwellings in the County.

The Council maintains a derelict sites register in accordance with the legislation and inspects sites which are in need of attention and liaises with the owners (where known). As an example, all derelict sites within a specified town centre zone in Kilrush were inspected and recorded in a report during 2017. Liaison with the local community group was part of the process and the Council continues to endeavour to address dereliction issues within towns and villages around the County.

The Planning Authority issued several notices to landowners with regard to the Vacant Sites Levy and it is anticipated that a number of sites will be added to the Vacant Site Register prior to the 01<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

### *CDP16.2: Town Improvement Strategies*

The Planning Department has initiated and is making progress on a number of projects which include:

- The preparation of a Kilrush Visitor Signage Management Plan is well advanced due for completion early 2019.
- Planning Department is currently working with the Barefield Tidy Towns in the preparation of a Public Realm Amenity Enhancement Plan for Ballyalla Lake.
- Currently procuring a design consultant for the preparation of a Cappa Enhancement Strategy.
- The 6 village pilot study incorporated recommendations for public realm enhancement

The Council's Public Area Enhancement Scheme under the Community Supports Scheme is a key initiative which supports tidy towns groups to improve their areas with a focus on public realm. The Tidy Towns Co-ordinator works with local groups and assists them by linking them with relevant sections of the Council including the area offices and also directs them

to various sources of funding. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

#### ***CDP16.3: Town Teams***

Clare Local Development Company administers the LEADER Programme in Clare and this funding implements their Local Development Strategy (which is specific to the LEADER Programme). Under the Programme, CLDC has established three Town Teams in the County (Kilrush, Ennistymon and Scarriff) and they are supporting these teams by producing plans for these areas. This is a 2-3 year process. The Council aims to support this process by building the capacity of the Town Teams. Clare County Council is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP16.4: Economic Development Fund***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. Clare County Council will continue to actively pursue funding streams that are made available as has been the case in 2017 and 2018.

#### ***CDP16.5: Opportunity Sites***

The Planning Department commissioned the preparation of three Masterplans for four key town centre Opportunity Sites in Ennis in order to generate discussion and stimulate their development. The sites include the Riverside Site, Harmony Row and Bank Place (OP9); The Post Office Field (OP5) and Analogue Building (OP4) and the Town Centre Expansion Area/Old Boys National School, Kilrush Road (OP1). The proposed Ennis 2040 Spatial and Economic Strategy will further explore potential for other town centre Opportunity Sites. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

#### ***CDP16.6: Town Centre Vacancy***

The Town Centre Health Check undertaken on an annual basis by the Planning Department provides a valuable mechanism for recording and tracking town centre vacancy which informs the development of initiatives to address this, for example the public realm enhancement schemes to regenerate the lane and bow-ways of the town centre, Parnell Street and also the development of Master plans for key town centre Opportunity Sites (Refer to CDP16.5 above).

As a project under the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative, the Economic Directive is currently undertaking a vacant enterprise space audit of Ennis which includes opportunities to liaise with local agents and property owners in order to identify barriers to use. As many of the enterprise spaces are located on the edge of the town centre their vacancy has a direct impact on the vibrancy of the town centre. The enterprise strategy will consider possible uses and redevelopment opportunities for vacant units and sites in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.

### ***CDP16.7: Addressing Depopulation***

The Planning Department has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the finding and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation.

In order to stimulate potential development of lands zoned for low density residential development the Planning Department offered respective landowners the opportunity to avail of a complimentary site suitability assessment to establish what capacity there may be to accommodate houses within the village based on existing waste water treatment limitations.

In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages.

### ***CDP16.8: Land identified as Areas on which the Vacant Site Levy can apply***

As required by the Urban Regeneration and Housing Act 2015 the Planning Department established a Register of Land identified as Areas on which the Vacant Site Levy can apply in January 2017. In 2018 7 properties were proposed for inclusion on the register and the respective landowners have been notified. An Implementation Progress Report was submitted to the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government in Sept 2018. It is anticipated that sites will be added to the Vacant Sites Register prior to 01<sup>st</sup> January 2019. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

### ***CDP16.9: Derelict Sites***

The Council has acquired properties in Ennis and Shannon under the CPO procedure and has liaised with the Housing section of the Council in order to explore options for use of derelict properties.

#### ***CDP16.10: Town Centre Infill Development***

This is on-going and the Planning Department ensures town centre place-making, public realm enhancement plans and opportunity site master plans promote the appropriate redevelopment of infill sites. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP16.11: Community Activity***

A range of national and local schemes available since 2016 benefit community groups, towns and villages right across the county. The various national and local funding schemes have assisted in realising much needed community projects. These schemes include CLÁR, Town and Village Renewal, Community Enhancement Programme, Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme, Healthy Ireland Funding, Community Supports Scheme, Local Improvement Scheme etc. The types of projects supported include: play areas, astro-turf facilities, public realm improvements, road safety measures at community facilities, community infrastructure improvements etc.

## Chapter 17 - Design and Built Environment

### *CDP17.1 Achieving Quality in the Public Realm*

Throughout 2017 and 2018 progress has been made in terms of public and private developments that make a positive contribution to the public realm. A number of public realm projects have been progressed over this time-frame. The publication of the studies *'The Regeneration of Lanes and Bow-Ways in the Medieval Core of Ennis'* and *'The Redesign of Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street to Enhance the Public Realm'* in May 2018 was the result of a long programme of study and work in relation to public realm projects for these two key areas in the town of Ennis. Applications for funding to progress these two public realm projects were prepared and submitted to the Urban Regeneration Development Fund in September 2018.

The Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration project has secured funding for two projects: €1,411,000 for Parnell Street, and the Lanes and Bow-ways and funding of €189,000 has been secured for Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street, O'Connell Street and High Street

The high quality studies and proposals for the Barrack Square, Parnell Street and the lanes and bow ways in Ennis, as well as success in terms of funding achieved, shows Clare County Council's commitment to bring about improvements to the public realm.

The provisions of CDP17.1 have been implemented through the Development Management functions of the Planning Department and the 12 design principles as set out in the Urban Design Manual (2009) have been incorporated into the design of a number of development proposals which formed Part 8 applications by Clare County Council during 2017 and 2018, including the design of the proposed new public library for Ennis (adjacent to Glór), the design of 51 new residential units at Bóthar na Lúchra, Tullyvarraga, Shannon and the design for 18 no. new houses Sea View Park, Quilty, County Clare amongst others. All of the Part 8 applications associated with these developments were accompanied by Design Statements.

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective through the Development Management function of the Planning Department.

### *CDP17.2 Universal Design*

Throughout 2017 and 2018 the Planning Department through its Development Management functions required that all new buildings, facilities and works to the public realm meaningfully engage with the principles of universal design and the importance of Universal Design has been incorporated into Clare County Council's own design proposals for new developments.

An example of where this has been implemented is the design of the proposed Shannon Town Park for which a Part 8 application was approved by Clare County Council in 2017, which has been designed incorporating universal design principles. Another example is the proposed housing development of 13 houses at Baurroe, Feakle, (which is currently

under construction) which was designed in accordance with Universal Design principles and the houses designed in accordance with Part M (Access & Use) of the Building Regulations.

### ***CDP17.3 Sustainable Developments***

Clare County Council remains committed to the implementation of objective CDP17.3 'Sustainable Developments' on an ongoing basis, including through the development management process and sustainable development principles have been incorporated into Clare County Councils own proposed developments throughout 2017 and 2018.

An example of Clare County Council's commitment to sustainable development in its own proposed building is the proposed new public library, gallery space and office space for Ennis to adjoin the existing Glór theatre building. The proposed new library for Ennis (which was designed in 2017 and approved in 2018) has been designed to a target BER level of A3 and its design was informed by the European Performance of Buildings Directive 2010/30/EU resulting in the new library building being designed in accordance with the Interim Near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB) performance specification. On site renewable energy will be provided by the use of solar panels on the roof.

A second example of sustainable development in terms of the Council's own works is the Council's proposed development of 8 dwelling houses and ancillary works at Roslevan, Ennis. The Part 8 application for this proposed development has been accompanied by a design statement which sets out details regarding site context, connectivity, services, traffic/access road proposals, building materials and energy performance. The houses as proposed to be constructed at Roslevan, Ennis are designed in accordance with Part L (Conservation of Fuel & Energy Dwellings) of the Building Regulations and will have a minimum A3 Building Energy Rating. The houses are designed to maximise amenity and energy efficiency by taking account of location, orientation and topography and are orientated to achieve an even distribution of solar gain to keep energy consumption down.

### ***CDP 17.4 Design and Built Environment***

Clare County Council remains committed to implementing this objective through the Pre Planning and Development Management Functions of the Planning Department and through the design and construction of the Councils own developments.

An example of where Clare County Council has implemented the provisions of CDP 17.4 throughout the time frame of this progress report is the development of 9 no. new houses at Clonlara. This development is the second phase of 'Glor na Srutha' which won the 2015 Irish Council for Social Housing Award for recognising excellence in design, management, community development and sustainability. The proposed new houses at Clonlara have been designed in accordance with Part M (Access & Use) and Part L (Conservation of Fuel & Energy Dwellings) of the Building Regulations.

## **Chapter 18 – Climate Change Adaptation, Flood Risk and Low Carbon Strategy**

### ***CDP18.1: Climate Change***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP18.2: Climate Change Adaptation***

Local Adaptation Plans are being developed on a regional basis in accordance with the strategy developed by the Local Government Management Agency and the City & County Managers Association. Clare County Council is in the Atlantic Seaboard South Region, which is being led by Cork County Council. A Climate Change Adaptation team has been assembled in Clare County Council and the Clare local adaptation plans will be prepared by September 2019.

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

### ***CDP18.3: Development of a Low Carbon Economy***

In 2018 Clare County Council installed charging points for two e cars in the Car Park of Aras Chontae an Chlair, in addition to this charging points were provided at Tim Smyth park, Active Ennis Leisure and the Lees road recreation park. The Electric Vehicle infrastructure is expected to increase substantially by 2023 with increased charging points at major fuel filling stations, and the introduction of electric vehicle charging tariffs.

The national electricity and renewable heat incentive schemes were announced in 2018, Renewable Electricity Supply Scheme and Renewable Heat Incentive Scheme respectively. These two schemes will have a significant impact on the development of renewable energy projects, which will in turn increase the energy entrepreneurs and reduce carbon intensity associated with energy production and the economy in general.

The electricity generation, storage and distribution market in Ireland is beginning to decentralise with a growing interest in Sustainable Energy Communities and the potential for Community scale energy producers and cooperatives. The Renewable Electricity Support Scheme for electricity incentives is ring fencing some supports specifically for community scale electricity generation. This community scale development will have the effect of increasing local low carbon economies and sustainability.

Energy services companies are showing interest in the creation of low carbon centres of commerce and community in some areas of County Clare. The energy companies are considering a range of technologies such as biomass Combined heat and power, lithium Ion storage batteries and farm scale solar photo voltaic as well as waste heat recovery and district heating networks. Progress in the range of infrastructure to support Low Carbon Economy is expected to increase significantly by 2023.

Clare County Council is working closely with Clare Local Development Company and a variety of business, community, tourism and festival committees to develop a “Green Ambassador” programme. The programme is building on the Clare Green Fleadh, which was a great success in 2016 & 2017. The Green Ambassador programme will provide skills to a wide range of groups to reduce the carbon footprint associated with several SME’s and community festivals.

#### ***CDP18.4: Energy Efficiency***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

As previously noted in response to CDP10.11 ‘Renewable Energy Development’, throughout 2017 and 2018 Wind energy projects as permitted by earlier grants of planning permission have been developed in West Clare and the capacity of an electricity substation on the Tulla Road at Ennis has been increased to facilitate renewable energy generation in West Clare. Throughout 2017 and 2018 planning applications for five Solar Farms have been submitted to and assessed by the Planning Department. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

Clare County Council as an organisation has improved its own energy efficiency by 18%, and anticipates meeting a target of 33% improvement in Energy Efficiency by 2020. Considerable progress has also been made on the thermal upgrade of local authority houses.

#### ***CDP18.5: Distributed Heat***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

As noted at CDP10.10 ‘Bioenergy’ throughout 2017 and 2018, Clare County Council and the Limerick Clare Energy Agency have been working closely with the Clare Local Development Company to advance the work of the Clare Wood Energy Project. Clare County Council has developed a forest management plan for its own biomass resources and has just completed a second harvesting cycle that will produce wood fuel capable of heating Áras Contae an Chláir.

Considerable interest is being shown in the establishment of district heating networks in establishing a number of district heating networks in Clare. Biomass and waste heat recovery are the heat sources being considered. It is expected that approximately 40,000 MWh of heat will be served by district heat networks by 2023.

#### ***CDP18.6: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment***

This objective is being implemented on an ongoing basis through the Development Management function of the Planning Department. At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

#### ***CDP18.7: CFRAMS***

Flood relief works at Sixmilebridge were completed in 2017. Arising from previous extreme flood events, including those of the 2015/2016 winter period, the council has been pursuing

feasible solutions in a number of areas with a view to minimisation of risk in the event that situations of a similar nature occur again.

In May of 2018 funding totalling €5.54 million was made available for a number of Clare Flood Relief Schemes to proceed to detailed design and construction under the Catchment Flood Risk Assessment and Management (CFRAM) Programme. The new flood relief schemes include Springfield at Clonlara, Kilkee, Kilrush, Bunratty and Killaloe and Shannon. Work on feasibility studies for these projects is ongoing at present.

Throughout 2018 further assessment under the Minor Works Scheme was carried out in terms of other flood relief schemes as identified by Clare County Council and funding for these schemes was provided by the Office of Public Works (OPW) which has already announced funding for the construction of the Ennis (South) Scheme.

***CDP18.8: Storm Water Management***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP18.9: Green Infrastructure and Flood Management***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

***CDP18.10: Maintenance of Rivers***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective.

## **Chapter 19 – Land Use and Zonings**

### ***CDP19.1: Local Area Plans***

In June 2018, the time period within which to prepare a replacement for the Shannon Local Area Plan 2012-2018 was extended by the Elected Members up to September 2022.

At present Ennis 2040 is being progressed and on foot of completion of this project in 2019, its findings and recommendations will inform the preparation of a new Ennis and Environs Local Area Plan.

### ***CDP19.2: Zoning of Lands***

It is considered that sufficient lands have been zoned in order to meet this objective. Please refer to Volume 3 (a) (b) (c) & (d) where the settlement plans and zoning objectives for all the settlements in the county are set out.

### ***CDP 19.3: Compliance with Zoning***

At this stage of the plan Clare County Council is in complete compliance and is committed to the on-going implementation of this objective. There has not been any material contraventions of the Development Plan within the first 2 years.

## **Volume 3(a) Ennis Municipal District Written Statement & Settlement Plans**

### ***Objective V3(a)1***

Clare County Council has regard to Ennis' strategic location and access on the Atlantic Corridor. The Atlantic Economic Corridor (AEC) is a linear network along the Western seaboard, stretching from Kerry to Donegal, which has the potential to act as a key enabler for the regional growth objectives of the National Planning Framework. In the summer of 2018 an Atlantic Economic Corridor Officer (AEC) was appointed to the Economic Development Directorate whose role is to assess existing and potential infrastructure assets and buildings on the enterprise space audit for Ennis. It is envisaged that the enterprise space audit for Ennis will be completed by spring 2019 and following on from this, that additional audits will be progressed in other towns in the County as well as the preparation of enterprise space strategies for same.

Ennis town centre continues to promote itself as a provider of an excellent quality of life. Clare County Council has been allocated €1.6 million towards the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project under the Government's €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, which is intended to drive regeneration and rejuvenation of strategic and underutilized areas within Ireland's cities and large towns. The funding will be used on two projects: Parnell Street and the Lanes and Bow-ways of Ennis which was submitted as a Category A application and Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street, O'Connell Street and High Street which was submitted as a Category B application.

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy is an initiative of the Economic Directorate to prepare an Economic Development, Spatial and Marketing Strategy for Ennis Town and Environs Area to 2040 and beyond. Clare County Council together with the consultant team of GVA Grimley Ltd held a targeted stakeholders event for the preparation of the Strategy on 4<sup>th</sup> September followed by a public consultation event on 10<sup>th</sup> November 2018. It is anticipated the Strategy will be completed and delivered in 2019, the contents of which will inform the preparation of the Ennis Town and Environs Local Area Plan.

### ***Objective V3(a)2***

Within the Ennis Municipal District area under the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, 34.48ha of lands were zoned for Enterprise development, 56.1ha were zoned for light industry and 32.78ha were zoned for Industry. Clare County Council will continue to monitor land availability within the Ennis Municipal District area and where necessary will address any issues arising.

The Core Strategy ensures compliance with the population targets as allocated by the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and their distribution throughout the County settlement hierarchy. Volume 3a provides zoning for residential development and associated objectives are consistent with the Core Strategy population targets set out in Chapter 2 of Volume 1. The Ennis Municipal District Plan provides a robust and sustainable platform on which to facilitate future new growth and residential development that is in line with the settlement hierarchy and assigned Core Strategy population targets.

A total of eighteen Opportunity Sites are identified. Masterplans in relation to OP1, OP4, OP5 and OP9 are concurrently underway and due for completion in early 2019, while OP2 was the subject of *The Redesign of Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street to Enhance the Public Realm* published in May 2018 and which received funding under the Government's Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.

Clare County Council hosted a stand in 2017 and 2018 at the high profile Retail Excellence annual showcase event promoting Ennis as an ideal place to locate your retail business. This event was attended by the top retailers in the Country.

Clare Local Enterprise Office, in association with Ennis Chamber of Commerce, delivered a "Town Retail Support Programme" aimed at training and enhancing the sales effectiveness of retail staff in Ennis. The initial workshop was attended by over 40 retailers with 21 retailers availing of a follow on one-to-one mentor support programme.

Clare County Council's Local Enterprise Office facilitated workshops in 2017 and 2018 to raise awareness of a grant available to local businesses to enhance their capacity to develop an online ecommerce presence. Over 160 Ennis businesses attended these workshops.

Clare County Council entered Ennis into the large town category of the Bank of Ireland Enterprise Town awards to find Ireland's most enterprising town. Ennis was the overall winner for Munster in its population category and only narrowly missed out on the overall national award.

The Council will continue to work in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate the current and future SMEs sustainability and growth.

### **Objective V3(a)3**

Public realm projects in the vicinity of Garraunakilla Market have been progressed with the publication of *The Redesign of Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street to Enhance the Public Realm* in May 2018. A feasibility study has been completed for public realm improvements with the objective to transform the area into a 'café quarter' that would act as a destination within the heart of the town.

A Festival & Events Co-ordinator was appointed in July 2017, a co-funded role supported by Ennis Municipal District and Ennis Chamber which has resulted in regular programming of festival events in the Garraunakilla market building. These events have ranged from educational events including children's creative workshops, mobile planetarium, bespoke performances, music workshops, music recitals, dance classes, group art exhibitions to fun events including Kids Discos, treasure hunts. Artisan Food markets have also become a key feature during the summer months, the lead up to Christmas and festival weekends including Ennis Food Festival and Halloween.

Clare County Council remains committed to facilitate improvements to the public realm in the vicinity of Garraunakilla Market and to encourage and facilitate the expansion of the Ennis Farmers' Market

#### **Objective V3(a)4**

The proposed development at Glór, Causeway Link, Ennis for the construction of an extension adjoining the existing Glór theatre building to provide a new public library, gallery space and associated office space was granted permission in February 2018. This will enhance the Town Centre offering of activities.

Ennis town centre continues to promote itself as an ideal place to locate modern retail business. Clare County Council hosted a stand in 2017 and 2018 at the high profile Retail Excellence annual showcase event to promote Ennis.

Clare County Council has been allocated €1.6 million towards the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project under the Government's €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, which is intended to drive regeneration and rejuvenation of strategic and underutilized areas within Ireland's cities and large towns. The funding will be used on two projects: Parnell Street and the Lanes and Bow-ways of Ennis which was submitted as a Category A application and Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street, O'Connell Street and High Street which was submitted as a Category B application.

Parnell Street, Ennis has a significant level of vacant property and an increasing lack of retail activity. With funding received under the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, the proposal will address the urgent need to reinvigorate this principal shopping street. The Lanes and Bow-Ways represent the medieval stage of the Town's history. The revitalisation will allow them to contribute positively to the Town Centre public realm, reinforcing their heritage character, and enhancing the permeability between key streets through increased pedestrian activity.

Master plans in relation to OP1, OP4, OP5 and OP9 are concurrently underway and due for completion in late 2018. OP1 relates to the former Boys National School and adjoining lands, the master plan brief for which required the guidance for future development in the identified Town Centre Expansion Area. The Town Centre Expansion Area measures 2.8 hectares and is zoned Mixed Use. The site has the potential to accommodate non-bulky comparison floor space. The outcome of the feasibility/master plan study will inform the level of retail development that may be considered to be appropriate on this site.

Permission was granted for the construction of a neighbourhood centre as part of a first phase of development at the Clare Road (R458) and Tobartescain Road in October 2018 Plan Ref.: 18/265 (currently on appeal)

#### **Objective V3(a)5**

In order to promote the town centre and to address issues of decline, a multi agency approach was developed, bringing together a range of expertise to analyse the issues facing the town centre and to develop an evidence-based approach to address the factors that support or inhibit town centre growth. A pilot, trans-disciplinary National Town Centre Health Check (TCHC) Training Programme was developed and Ennis was selected as one of the towns to participate in the pilot programme. The Ennis Town Centre Health Check Report was prepared in 2017 and an objective of the study was to provide best practice

baselines for assessing the impacts of proposed retail development on the town centre. In 2018 the Ennis Town Centre Health Check has been completed and will be made available in the coming months.

Clare County Council has been allocated €1.6 million towards the Ennis Town Centre Public Realm Regeneration Project under the Government's €2 billion Urban Regeneration and Development Fund, which is intended to drive regeneration and rejuvenation of strategic and underutilized areas within Ireland's cities and large towns. The funding will be used on two projects: Parnell Street and the Lanes and Bow-ways of Ennis and Barrack Square and Old Barrack Street, O'Connell Street and High Street. Both these projects have a shared purpose of regenerating the public realm and will enhance the Town Centre environment, making it a more accessible and attractive.

#### **Objective V3(a)6**

Please refer to the previous comments referring to the preparation of Materplans for opportunity sites OP1, OP4, OP5 and OP9.

#### **Objective V3(a)7**

The Masterplan for OP1 is currently underway within the Planning Department and due for completion in late 2018. OP1 relates to the former Boys National School and adjoining lands, the masterplan brief required guidance for future development in the identified Town Centre Expansion Area. The Town Centre Expansion Area measures 2.8 hectares and is zoned Mixed Use. The site has the potential to accommodate non-bulky comparison floor space. The outcome of the feasibility/masterplan study will inform the level of retail development that may be appropriate on this site.

#### **Objective V3(a)8**

Clare County Council is committed to the ongoing process to progress the sustainable development of neighbourhoods within the Ennis and Environs area. Planning permission was granted in 2018 at the neighbourhood centre at Tobartescain as part of a first phase of development. This application is current on appeal.

The progression of the Local Infrastructure Housing Infrastructure Fund (LIHAF) link road *Lahinch Road (N85) to Drumcliff Road (L4182) project* will significantly contribute to the development of the Claireen Neighbourhood Centre.

Woodstock Neighbourhood incorporates R24 Ashling which was taken in charge in May 2018 with the 19 no. units indicated on the R24 zoned lands now being complete. They were constructed prior to 2017 but were left incomplete. Clare County Council undertook a remedial scheme that resulted in these units being refurbished and habitable.

#### **Objective V3(a)9**

Permission was granted for the change of use and sub-division of an existing industrial unit into a Civil Defence Headquarters, Fleet Storage Depot, Training Room and ancillary office accommodation, incubation/enterprise space and records management centre at the Quin Road Business Park in July 2018.

### **Objective V3(a)10**

Permission was granted to Limerick and Clare Educational Training Board to extend the existing secondary school buildings at Ennis Community College by a total combined area of 4175m<sup>2</sup> in June 2017. Permission was also granted for development which will consist of the change of use of existing factory unit/sales unit to training rooms, offices and other ancillary areas for use as an educational and training centre located at Clonroad Business Park in November 2018.

### **Objective V3(a)11**

Ennis has been promoted as the gateway to County Clare in its marketing programme in 2018. As the county town, Ennis has the capacity to accommodate visitors who are encouraged to stay another night and take in all the offerings there are in the four corners of the county. In a joint initiative, Ennis Municipal District and Ennis Chamber came together to seek 'Coach Friendly Destination' accreditation for Ennis (awarded by the Coach Tourism and Transportation Council (CTTC) in October 2017. That accreditation has been used as a platform to attract more coach tour business into Ennis and to build stronger ties between Ennis and the County's premium visitor attraction, The Cliffs of Moher.

A bespoke brochure has been produced to attract more coach business and also focuses on communicating Ennis as 'A Great Place and a Great Base' with simple communication to highlight the town's proximity to so many leading natural and built attractions while also highlighting Ennis as a hub for food and culture - a town in which to unwind, explore and enjoy the very best of Irish culture

Ennis has played host to a number of year round festivals and events in 2018 such as music, theatre, comedy and visual arts in Glór; Clare Garden Festival, Ennis Book Club Festival, Ennis Fleadh Nua, Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan – Munster Fleadh, Ennis Food Festival, Ennis Creative Quarter Halloween Festival and Ennis Trad Festival. Many of these festivals take place in shoulder and off-season periods and assist greatly in extending the tourism visitor season.

Clare County Council is working towards the development and marketing of a boutique style conference offering for Ennis and was recently successful in attracting a number of small/focussed conference events including Diageo sales conference. Ennis will host the very sociable gathering for 'Up With People' European Alumni in April 2019 that will attract over 200 delegates, many travelling with family, booking a mix of accommodation, who will dine at multiple venues across the weekend. Working with the Festivals & Events Co-ordinator the aim is to create a 'festival' atmosphere for this event. A bespoke programme in Tour Guiding with a focus on the history, heritage and culture of Ennis was launched by LIT in October 2018, on the back of work carried out by the 'Coach Friendly Committee'. With 26 students signed up for this special purpose programme, it is envisaged that many of this cohort, thanks to active encouragement, will establish local guided experience/offers. This is with a view to building a programme of professionally developed experiences for tourists to tap into and enjoy on a year-round basis in Ennis.

Visit Ennis is a brand that was developed by Promote Ennis (with representatives from Ennis Chamber of Commerce, Ennis businesses and Ennis MD) and is being promoted through the Visit Ennis website. The Visit Clare brand also promotes Ennis as its county town central to its tourism offering, with the brand being actively promoted through the Visit Ennis website. In 2017 /2018 the Promote Ennis Group developed a digital marketing strategy for Ennis. In 2019 the aim is to raise funding to support Ennis attain greater and more appropriate visibility on the Digital Highway. In addition the preparation of the Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Plan currently being undertaken by GVA Grimley Ltd and includes the formation of a comprehensive 'brand' and marketing strategy for Ennis.

The Heritage Officer of Clare County Council commissioned publications on the Shannon Estuary Way which involved communicating with 8 communities, including Clarecastle on Heritage initiatives including Nature based tourism initiatives. Clarecastle has received funding from Clare County Council and the Heritage Council to implement public realm improvements and the Heritage Trail in 2018.

#### ***Objective V3(a)12***

Ennis 2040 Economic and Spatial Strategy is an initiative of Clare County Council to prepare an Economic Development, Spatial and Marketing Strategy for Ennis Town and Environs area to 2040 and beyond. Upon completion the contents will inform suitable location options to facilitate a hotel and convention facility.

#### ***Objective V3(a)13***

Ennis Municipal District continues to work in partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and business interests in Ennis in order to support existing tourism products and services. Ennis MD and the Chamber of Commerce provide advice and support for a wide range of events and festivals including the St. Patrick's Day Parade, Ennis Book Festival, Ennis Street Arts Festival, The Ennis Food Festival, Ennis Creative Quarter Halloween Festival and Ennis Trad Festival. Fleadh Cheoil na Mumhan (Munster Fleadh) was held in Ennis in 2018, and will do so again in 2019. In addition, a number of supported events are held in the new Market Building e.g Spring Fest and Summer Fest.

#### ***Objective V3(a)14***

In early 2017 the Road Design Office commenced an investigation of the disused West Clare Railway line between the end of WCRG Phase 1 (Ballymaquiggan townland) and Spanish Point approx 48 km, part of which lies in the Ennis Municipal District. This investigation involved desk studies, correspondence with landowners and some walk-over studies where permission was granted by landowners.

In July 2018, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport launched a Strategy on how Greenways should be progressed and Clare County Council will be adhering to same where possible.

### **Objective V3(a)15**

The Ennis South Flood Scheme has progressed to tender report stage and work should commence in 2019.

The OPW Upper & Lower Fergus Certified Drainage Scheme is substantially complete and the remaining section between Bank Place and Harmony Row is due to commence in 2019. There are a number of smaller flood schemes being progressed by Clare County Council for submission to the OPW under the minor flood mitigation schemes funding.

### **Objective V3(a)16**

1. A section from Gort Road to the Ennis Technology Park opened in 2018.
2. Clare County Council secured conditional Local Infrastructure Housing Activation Fund (LIHAF) grant funding approval in 2017 for the delivery of infrastructure to facilitate housing at lands at Claureen, Ennis.
3. No progress to report to date
4. Procurement to appoint design consultants for the delivery of this infrastructure has commenced.
5. A local road between Kilrush and Drumbiggle Roads is being considered as part of masterplan for OP1.
6. No progress to report to date
7. No progress to report to date
8. No progress to report to date
9. No progress to report to date
10. Reference response to Objective 14.

Clare County Council endeavors to include for cyclist and pedestrian facilities in their road infrastructure as per the National Cycle Manual.

The Council will continue to work in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders to facilitate the planning and delivery of “Design Manual for Roads and Streets” (DMURS) in new road and street schemes and in the upgrading of existing roads.

### **Objective V3(a)17**

The Ennis Water Mains Rehabilitation Contract, which was part of the Ennis Water Conservation Strategy, provided for the replacement of 17km of old cement and cast iron water mains throughout the greater Ennis Area with approximately 12km of new water mains. The contract commenced in January 2015 and was completed in August 2017. This contract in conjunction with the combined synergies of the water conservation unit and the find and fix team resulted in an overall reduction of water consumption within the Ennis Area of 20%.

### **Objective V3(a)18**

As part of the Ennis Main Drainage Plan, Ennis North’s Waste Water Treatment Plant, Clonroadmore More, received an upgrade and this was completed in November 2017. This upgrade was designed primarily to deliver on compliance standards (ELV’s) set down by the EPA. The plant is designed for 30,150 PE (biological) however certain hydraulic pinch points remained outside this upgrade.

Currently wastewater in Clarecastle is pumped into the river Fergus via Quay Rd pumping station. Under Irish Waters UTAS (Untreated Agglomerations Study) project it is expected that in 2019 the wastewater collected at Quay Road pumping station will be diverted via a new wastewater pipeline to Clareabbey WWTP.

## **Volume 3(b) Shannon Municipal District Written Statement & Settlement Plans**

### **Linked Gateway**

#### ***Shannon***

The Shannon Municipal District area office undertook the following works amongst other during 2017/2018:

- New footpaths and lights installed along Bothar Na Rinne;
- Upgrade of traffic light signals at the junction of Bothar Mór and Bealach Bui and Bothar Mór and Bothar Na Luchra;
- Renewal of the Drumgeely pedestrian crossing on the N19 linking the industrial estate to the town;
- New safe crossing pedestrian infrastructure installed at St. Aidans School;
- Lighting and new surfacing works along the Sli Na Mara route

With funding under Town and Village Renewal 2018, Shannon Aviation Museum (currently known as Atlantic Air Adventures) intends to expand its premises which will offer an enhanced, higher quality product as an attraction in order to draw a greater number and more diverse audiences.

With a better museum offering, this centre will attract more tourists. Visitors will be more self guided and the length of stay and revenue will increase. All exhibits will be displayed to their best advantage and protected from the elements.

### **Small Towns**

#### ***Newmarket-on-Fergus***

The Shannon Municipal District area office upgraded footpaths in 2018 along with a full overlay of the Main Street. Speed control ramps were also installed at the Green as part of this project.

Funded under Town and Village Renewal 2017, 'Obair' Newmarket is in the process of developing a currently unused building to provide for:

- Food Incubation Hubs - An incubation unit for four food-related start-ups with the intention of providing additional employment locally
- Food Production Kitchen - A production kitchen that will allow the current 'Meals on Wheels' service to triple its current supply and create additional full time and delivery jobs.
- Training Kitchen - A training unit for the delivery of QQI-certified courses for chefs, cooks and hospitality sector workers at level 5 LTI and private business training in HACCAP, such as Barista skills and customer service will provide the necessary local skills for employment.

- Provision of a local venue where functions can be held with catering provided in house or by contracted service providers.

Planning Permission has been received and works expected to commence in January 2019.

### *Large Villages*

#### *Bunratty*

The Shannon Municipal District area office has identified a need in 2018 and intends to install a footpath to link into the new bus stop in 2019.

#### *Parteen Village*

The Shannon Municipal District area office installed a traffic light signalised junction and controlled pedestrian crossing points and new path towards the school in 2017.

### *Clusters*

#### *Meelick*

The Shannon Municipal District area office is currently installing new footpaths, new road surfaces, improved lighting and speed control measures at Meelick School.

#### ***Architectural Conservation: Shannon Municipal District Area***

During 2017/2018 the Architectural Conservation Officer reported on planning issues pertaining to protected structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, vernacular buildings, infrastructural works of built heritage interest and archaeological issues within the Shannon Municipal District area. 6 no. Section 57 declarations were issued between 2017 and 2018 to permit owners to carry out works to protected structures. Support was given to tidy towns and community groups.

Funding for protected structures and buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) was provided in both 2017 and 2018 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF). Two conservation projects were grant aided under the BHIS and SRF schemes in the Shannon Municipal District Area which were inspected by the Architectural Conservation Officer, before during and on completion.

The Architectural Conservation Officer facilitated a number of meetings in 2017 and 2018 with various Council officials, external agencies and groups to progress repairs to historic buildings e.g. Oatfield Church, and the ruins of Ballysheen and Feenagh mediaeval churches and graveyards.

## **Volume 3(c) Killaloe Municipal District Written Statement & Settlement Plans**

### **Service Towns**

#### ***Scariff / Tuamgraney***

With funding received under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2017, a significant public realm improvement initiative at the approach road from Scariff to Tuamgraney and also to Scariff Main Street and Harbour has been designed. Works on the Tuamgraney element of the Gateway project have commenced and it is envisaged that works on the Scariff element will be completed in 2019. These initiatives will help drive both communities forward economically and bring its projected outcomes beyond public realm improvements to being an Economic Gateway Project.

The project design will achieve the following:

- Help encourage more visitor traffic off the R352 into Scariff Town Centre and hence greater footfall.
- Signal the importance of Tuamgraney as a Tourism Centre.
- Significantly enhance and signal the entry to Scariff Harbour attracting more visitors.
- Strengthen the public realm around the only entrance to the vacant FINSA site making it more attractive to a future reuse.
- Significantly improve pedestrian safety and accessibility at heavily trafficked locations.

A Pedestrian Crossing adjacent to National School in Tuamgraney has been designed and will be completed in early 2019.

### **Small Towns**

#### ***Killaloe***

Killaloe is one of the key towns on the Lough Derg Blueway which was launched in March 2018 with funding by Rural, Economic and Development Zone (REDZ). It is now a recognised brand which includes a package of quality marketing and promotional material which will benefit the key partner agencies in its further development.

Lough Derg is a key tourism asset and therefore the delivery of a Blueway is timely and acts as a catalyst for growth in the rural towns and villages around Lough Derg. Given the fact that it is being marketed as an experiential product, the Lough Derg Blueway will benefit the local economies in the lakeside towns and villages of Clare. The Blueway is an organic offering and will enhance employment opportunities by fostering entrepreneurship within communities. By virtue of the fact that it is geographically easy to reach from any part of Ireland, it is expected that this will become a self promoting product to create a quality experience for the tourist and thus generate repeat business.

In November 2018, the Department of Rural and Community Development announced funding of €498,000 under the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme 2018, for the extension of the Lough Derg Blueway Amenity Trail and Looped walks. This will provide an extension of the existing path, which already extends from Killaloe to Twomilegate to continue from Bealkelly to Tuamgraney. This will be a welcome boost to the 'slow tourism' product that the Blueway has to offer and will have the potential for a trail to continue from

Killaloe right through to Scariff. The promotion of slow tourism is key for visitors to experience the nature and scenery that Lough Derg has to offer, whilst also availing of the amenities and services from within the locality.

With funding awarded under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2018, Killaloe/Ballina Community & Family Resource Centre (KBFRCC) is to establish a Training & Development Hub at The Green, Killaloe. This training facility will be located at the rear of the existing building and will include a fully equipped catering kitchen, a multi-purpose training room, a garden classroom and a Café space. The Hub will be a unique resource for the community and will allow for a project that embraces the needs of the community and which can fill the 'gaps' and deliver much needed services locally.

The Killaloe Municipal District area office completed an upgrade to footpaths on New Street. A new footpath between St. Anne's Secondary School and the Clarisford Recreation Area has been designed and works commenced in December 2018. A new footpath on Abbey St. has also been designed and works will be completed in 2019.

Following the publication by the Planning Department of the Masterplan of Tobermurragh and Bane Field, elements of this plan have commenced with Heritage Council funding being secured for the formation of a habitat plan and for the identification of invasive species on the site in 2018.

### **Tulla**

The former Mercy Convent building in Tulla has undergone significant refurbishment with funding under the Town and Village Renewal Schemes in 2017 and 2018 and now operates as a cultural centre known as Cnoc na Gaoithe (Windswept Hill) run by the Comhaltas organisation. The centre opened its doors in 2012 and has thrived ever since. Phase 1 of the refurbishment included the provision of accommodation on the first floor and Phase 2 involves the provision of onsite tea room facilities to cater for the needs of visitors as part of the package offered. This project displays a very strong economic development element based on the increased visitor numbers, with both national and international visitors expected to visit for week long workshops/retreats/cultural tours, with overnight stays. This will result in more revenue being spent in the locality with the visitors partaking in activities both cultural, sporting, tourist related, visiting tourist destinations, shopping, eating and drinking locally. This will result in job creation, not only in Cnoc na Gaoithe in the housekeeping/catering/caretaking/reception/administration positions, but also will increase the numbers of tutors of music, song, dance, wellness activities, i.e. yoga, meditation and language tutors and may contribute to job creation in other business in the Town.

The Killaloe Municipal District area office completed an upgrade to footpaths along with the provision of off street parking on Main St. Tulla. New footpaths were completed on the Milltown Road and they also completed footpaths linking Tulla to the regional road with a tie-in to the walkway along the regional road.

A new pedestrian crossing was constructed at St. Joseph's Secondary School which was a condition of its planning permission.

## Large Villages

### **Broadford**

The Planning Department has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the findings and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation.

In order to stimulate potential development of lands zoned for low density residential development the Planning Department offered respective landowners the opportunity to avail of a complimentary site suitability assessment to establish what capacity there may be to accommodate houses within the village based on existing waste water treatment limitations. One site assessment was completed for Broadford.

In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages.

### **Crusheen**

The Killaloe Municipal District area office completed improvements to the footpaths on Main Street, Crusheen in late December 2018. Traffic calming and improvements to pedestrian access along the Tulla Road linking the village with the national school were also completed. There are also plans to relocate bus shelters which are currently at design stage.

### **Feakle**

In March 2018, a digital hub facility was officially opened in Feakle by Minister Pat Breen. The facility, which is part of Clare County Councils Digi Clare initiative is among a number of actions identified in the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026, which will support rural social enterprises and the wider community by providing flexible, affordable hot-desks, co-working, conference and training facilities for residents, visitors and entrepreneurs for a minimal daily fee.

A Part VIII consent was progressed in February 2018 on lands zoned LDR2 for the construction of 13 no. new houses in Feakle. As part of the development a pedestrian route will be created linking the village main street to the school and playground via a new laneway which is aimed at supporting Feakle as a “liveable place” where children can safely walk to school.

### ***Kilkishen***

The Killaloe Municipal District area office completed upgrading of footpaths linking Kilkishen village to the national school which incorporated traffic calming measures.

### ***Mountshannon***

Following the acquisition of 41 acres on Holy Island in 2015 and the appointment of Solearth Architecture by Clare County Council in 2016, a draft Visitor Management and Sustainable Tourism Development Plan for Inis Cealtra (Holy Island) was presented for public consultation in March 2017 in Mountshannon Community Hall. A total of 18 submissions were received at the end of the public consultation period which were considered in the preparation of the final plan which was then presented one final time to the local community in July 2017. The attendance and feedback on the final plan was very positive and the community look forward to its future implementation. The Plan sets out 28 objectives that aim to increase visitor traffic to Inis Cealtra and other heritage sites and will see the development of a new visitor centre in Mounshannon. The Elected Members considered and endorsed the Plan at the July 2018 Council meeting. The Rural Directorate of Clare County Council will progress the delivery of the objectives in the coming years.

The Killaloe Municipal District area office provided new and upgraded footpaths from Mountshannon village to the Harbour area, incorporating a new crossing to the public park.

### ***O'Briensbridge***

The Killaloe Municipal District area office introduced traffic signals to the bridge linking Tipperary/Limerick with County Clare. They also advanced works to allow reopening of a section of the Canal Bank Walk which are due for completion in 2019.

### ***Whitegate***

The Planning Department has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the findings and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation.

In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages.

The Killaloe Municipal District area office undertook upgrades to the footpaths at the Half Barrel public house.

### **Small Villages**

#### **Flagmount**

The Planning Department has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the findings and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation. In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages. The Killaloe Municipal District area office undertook upgrades to the footpath along Main St. In Flagmount.

#### **O'Callaghans Mills**

The Killaloe Municipal District area office completed a new footpath linking the low street area of the village to the edge of the village.

#### **Ogonnelloe**

The Killaloe Municipal District area office completed a new footpath between Ogonnelloe and Tuamgraney.

### **Architectural Conservation: Killaloe Municipal District Area**

During 2017 and 2018 the Architectural Conservation Officer reported on planning issues pertaining to protected structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, vernacular buildings, infrastructural works of built heritage interest and archaeological issues within the Killaloe Municipal District area. 14 no. Section 57 Declarations were issued between 2017 and 2018 to permit owners to carry out works to protected structures. Support was given to tidy towns and community groups.

Funding for protected structures and buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) was provided in 2017 and 2018 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF). In total, nine conservation projects were grant aided to assist works under the BHIS and SRF schemes in the Killaloe Municipal District Area, all of which were inspected by the Architectural Conservation Officer, before during and on completion.

## **Volume 3(d) West Clare Municipal District Written Statement & Settlement Plans**

### **Service Towns**

#### ***Kilrush (including Cappa village and Pier)***

Funded under Town and Village Renewal 2017 and as part of the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026 to achieve greater scale and comparative advantage, towns will be encouraged to work together as will rural parishes. One such example is the complementary resources of the combined towns of Kilrush and Kilkee, which will be adequate to meet the needs of the modern entrepreneur, resident and visitor alike. These two towns being connected have historic connotations, with the operation of the West Clare Railway between 1887 and 1961 with terminuses at Kilrush and Kilkee. The Kilrush Kilkee Combined Town project is a project that supports entrepreneurship. There will be two buildings converted in each town, which will have a combined purpose of providing for the development of Enterprise Hubs, Hot Desk Facilities, Digital Hubs, Creative Hubs, Training Facilities and a Tourism Information Hub. The first floor of the existing Kilrush Municipal District office has now been converted into a Strategic Business Access Hub where micro and small enterprises in West Clare are able to access all digital services and avail of hot desk facilities. The Kilrush Digital Hub facility was officially opened by Minister Pat Breen. The facility, which is part of Clare County Councils initiative is among the actions identified in the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026, which will support rural social enterprises and the wider community by providing flexible, affordable hot-desks, co-working, conference and training facilities for residents, visitors and entrepreneurs for a minimal daily fee. The need for this hub and other similar digital and multi-service centre hubs around Clare, is in recognition of the fact that entrepreneurs are the backbone of rural economies. Such entrepreneurship and business investment must continue to be encouraged and supported. This digital hub helps those who may otherwise work in isolation to come together to share ideas and encouragement. Also within Kilrush, there is a seasonal dedicated tourist information point developed, providing information on tourist attractions in the West Clare Area. This tourist information facility will be located just off the Market Square in Kilrush.

#### ***Ennistymon***

Awarded funding under the Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2018 and Town and Village Renewal 2017, the Ennistymon Multi Service Centre will be a flagship service centre for Rural Clare. Ennistymon has been identified by Clare County Council as a market town in need of support both economically and socially. There is no dedicated facility in the area to foster and support business and therefore this project will fill that gap and lead to the creation of much needed employment and support in Ennistymon and its hinterland. The former Fitzpatrick's Supermarket on Parliament Street will be converted into a multi functional facility for the town. The first floor will house the Family Resource Centre and the ground floor will include Enterprise hubs with supports for business, innovation and tourism with the provision of digital hubs, innovation unit, incubation units and hot desks. The centre will make a significant contribution to employment creation and local regeneration. An adjacent site has been identified and will be developed to provide additional car parking in the locality, a much needed requirement for Ennistymon.

The West Clare Municipal District area office in Ennistymon upgraded footpaths at various locations along the Main Street in 2017/2018.

### ***Lahinch***

The West Clare Municipal District area office in Ennistymon completed a number of works in Lahinch during 2017 which included a new footway area at Marine Parade, a Rock Armour Sectional Defence along the promenade and provision of driver feedback signs on the N67 and on the R478. In 2018, works included a new car park design for the Liscannor Road which includes 30 extra spaces and which was resurfaced December 2018, a new brick paving pedestrian lane off the Main Street and the taking in charge of a new pedestrian crossing at Lahinch Golf Club.

### **Small Towns**

#### ***Lisdoonvarna***

An application has been submitted under Rural Regeneration Development Fund 2018 (Category 2) which is for the pre-development project which will assist in advancing the implementation of the plan to develop the Spa Wells complex in Lisdoonvarna to operate as a high-end Living Wellness Campus. The overarching goal is to restore the Spa Wells site as a high-volume tourist attraction with emphasis and focus on the growing wellness and ecotourism sectors. This predevelopment project is required to prepare a set of plans, designs and works necessary to renovate the existing buildings. In order to ensure the sustainable development of the complex specialists in energy, water and biodiversity will be engaged as part of the project team. The Project Promoter is Lisdoonvarna Failte and supported by Clare County Council.

The West Clare Municipal District area office in Ennistymon completed upgrades to the footpaths at Rooska in 2017 and up-grades to the footpaths at N67 in 2018.

#### ***Miltown Malbay***

In March 2018, a digital hub facility was officially opened in Miltown Malbay by Minister Pat Breen. The facility, which is part of the Clare County Councils DigiClare initiative, is among the actions identified in the Clare Rural Development Strategy 2026, which will support rural social enterprises and the wider community by providing flexible, affordable hot-desks, co-working, conference and training facilities for residents, visitors and entrepreneurs for a minimal daily fee. The need for this hub and other similar digital and multi-service centre hubs around Clare is in recognition of the fact that entrepreneurs are the backbone of rural economies. Such entrepreneurship and business investment must continue to be encouraged and supported. This digital hub helps those who may otherwise work in isolation to come together to share ideas and encouragement.

Funded by Town and Village Renewal 2017, Miltown Malbay Development Committee will refurbish the existing community centre located in the heart of the town to provide a modern fit for purpose focal point for the local community and visitors to the area. Within this centre there will be an audio-visual/exhibition room created that will showcase for tourists the highlights of the area, including information on Clare's WAW, local history and points of interest and Clare's rich heritage of traditional music and dance, proposed

Greenway etc. The re-development is critical to the ongoing success and international reputation of the Scoil Samhraidh Willie Clancy which is one of the largest arts events in the country. The 400 seated performance hall with retractable stage will provide a range of entertainment options as well as providing the largest indoor sports/fitness facility in the area. The increased room capacity will allow for more clubs/groups to use the facility at a given time.

The West Clare Municipal District area office completed upgrades to the footpath on Main Street and provided a Pedestrian Crossing at Miltown Malbay National School in 2017. In 2018 works included reconstruction of Main Street and a section of the Flag Road, and an upgrade of Upper Church Street. Works also commenced which are due to continue into 2019 on the upgrade of Hills Lane linking Main Street to Supervalu and the reconstruction of footpaths at various sections between Spanish Point and Miltown Malbay

### **Large Villages**

#### **Ballyvaughan**

The West Clare Municipal District area office completed an upgrade of footpaths on the Main Street and intend to rrepair further sections of footpaths in Ballyvaughan Village in 2019.

#### **Cooraclare**

The Planning Department has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the findings and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation.

In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages.

#### **Corofin**

The West Clare Municipal District area office undertook road resurfacing of the R476 into Corofin village in 2017. In 2018 they resurfaced the car park area near the Community Centre, upgraded footpaths near the bridge and upgraded other footpaths in association with Corofin Community Group.

### ***Doolin (including Pier)***

The West Clare Municipal District area office undertook the following works in 2017/2018: Resurfacing of road at Fisher Street Bridge to Hotel Doolin and from Roadford Bridge to Russell Centre, provision of new public toilet facilities at Doolin Pier and provision of a new footpath linking Fisher Street to Hotel Doolin Cross (due for completion in 2019).

Two applications were submitted by Clare County Council under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in September 2018. One sought funding for the development of a Visitor Management facility including village enhancement works and the second seeking funding for wastewater treatment and disposal. To date neither application has been successful.

### ***Doonbeg***

Funded by Town and Village Renewal Scheme 2017 there are plans to develop two coastal walks which aim of increasing visitor numbers and revenues by linking Doonbeg's two Discovery Points (Doughmore Beach and White Strand) along the Wild Atlantic Way and extending the local trail infrastructure and tourist activities (heritage, environment, history, flora and fauna) in order to link with walks in Kilkee and other West Clare routes thus acquiring the scale that will allow national and regional marketing.

The first walk will commence at Doonbeg Castle and Bridge extending to the Discovery Point at White Strand (Blue Flag Beach). The second is a scenic looped walk beginning from a designated car parking area in the village and extending to the Discovery Point at Doughmore Beach.

### ***Inagh***

The West Clare Municipal District area office provided a new pedestrian crossing across R460 linking the church area to the shop in 2018.

### ***Kilfenora***

The West Clare Municipal District area office laid a new road surface throughout the village along with some footpath upgrades in 2017.

### ***Killadysert***

Funded by Town and Village Renewal 2017, Kildysart Community Development will build on the success of the Wild Atlantic Way and the recently launched Shannon Estuary Way whose Northern route extends from Clarecastle to Kilrush (hour and half drive) with Kildysart located mid-way.

The tourism offering of Kildysart and its hinterland will be enhanced by way of:

- 1) Creating attractions that encourage additional 'overnights' and 'stops' by:
  - increasing day visits to the islands and to Beeve's Lighthouse in the Estuary. This will require improving the slipway at Crovaghan pier in Kildysart (Planning Permission number 18252).
  - developing an area for Camping and Camper Vans proximate to the current Picnic area in Kildysart including new toilet and showering facilities (Planning Permission number 18251)
  - Increasing the number of walking/cycling routes and involving additional safety measures and signage

- 2) Creating attractions and facilities to encourage ‘overnights’ and/or ‘stops’, which, in addition to the above, will see the development of a low cost Interpretive Centre for which research will be undertaken.

### ***Mullagh***

The Planning Department has undertaken pilot studies for six villages in the County which are currently experiencing population decline. The villages of Broadford, Carriagholt, Cooraclare, Flagmount, Mullagh and Whitegate were chosen in consultation with the local elected members and a pilot study undertaken for each involving detailed survey and analysis of the villages relating to land-use, public realm, population and demographics, built environment, zoned lands suitability for low density housing etc. A public consultation event was held in each of the villages at the start of the study in order to gain local information and identify local issues which the study then evaluated and identified opportunities and initiatives which could be community led that would contribute to the enhancement, revitalisation and growth of each village. A second public consultation was held in each of the villages to present the findings and recommendations of the study. The final studies will be presented to each of the village communities as a blue print for future initiatives which the respective communities can lead in their implementation.

In response to issues raised during the public consultation events, the Planning Department offered a Paint Scheme to the communities of these villages during the summer months of 2018 as a mechanism to assist in the visual enhancement of individual buildings and the overall public realm of the villages. Overall there was a positive response to the scheme with a total of 60 properties benefitting from the scheme throughout the six villages.

### ***Quilty***

The West Clare Municipal District area office provided a new pedestrian crossing at N67 connecting residential and commercial in 2018 (due for completion in 2019).

### **Small Villages**

#### ***Ballynacally***

Funded by Town and Village Renewal 2018, Ballynacally Development Association own 3 cottages which are currently vacant. The proposal involves the conversion of 2 of the cottages into a single 3 bed roomed self catering apartment. This would provide much needed tourist accommodation to cater for tourists to Ballynacally which is located along the new newly established Shannon Estuary Way. It is proposed to convert the third cottage into a Community Co-Op shop by local people to sell their produce or showcase arts and crafts. It is also intended to operate a Tourist Information Point from the Co-Op shop. It will be operated by Ballynacally Development Association. The conversion of these 3 vacant cottages into a 3 bed-roomed apartment and co-op store will greatly increase visitor numbers, both national and international, who will be able to come to stay in Ballynacally with the resultant spin off to the local economy.

#### ***Connolly***

The West Clare Municipal District area office provided a new pedestrian crossing at Connolly National School and undertook re-surfacing of the R474 from Connolly Village to Kearney’s Pub during 2017/2018.

### ***Spanish Point***

The West Clare Municipal District area office provided a new footpath linking the hotel to the beach, provided a new toilet block at the beach in conjunction with the Environment Department and upgraded footpaths between Spanish Point and Miltown Malbay (due for completion in 2019).

### ***Architectural Conservation: West Clare Municipal District Area***

During 2017/2018 the Architectural Conservation Officer reported on planning issues pertaining to protected structures, Architectural Conservation Areas, vernacular buildings, infrastructural works of built heritage interest and archaeological issues within the West Clare Municipal District area. 25 no. Section 57 declarations were issued between 2017 and 2018 to permit owners to carry out works to protected structures. Support was given to tidy towns and community groups.

Funding for protected structures and buildings in Architectural Conservation Areas (ACAs) was provided in both 2017 and 2018 by the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht through the Built Heritage Investment Scheme (BHIS) and the Structures at Risk Fund (SRF). In total, eleven conservation projects were grant aided to assist works under the BHIS and SRF schemes in the West Clare Municipal District Area, all of which were inspected by the Architectural Conservation Officer, before during and on completion.

The ACO carried out an archaeological excavation and supervised extensive conservation works to Noughaval church, Kilfenora. A weekend Building Limes Course was held in Killinaboy, in August 2018, in conjunction with SPAB Ireland which was funded by The Heritage Council. It was attended by over 60 participants, most of whom were involved in the construction industry as professionals and crafts people. The course comprised of talks and reviews of case studies, site inspections and practical sessions.

## **Volumes 4- 10**

### **Volume 4 Record of Protected Structures**

Clare County Councils Record of Protected Structures is being implemented on an ongoing basis through the Planning Development functions and through the Conservation supports and funding as made available through the Conservation Office and Architectural Conservation Officer of the Planning Department.

### **Volume 5 Clare Wind Energy Strategy**

The Clare Wind Energy Strategy is being implemented on an ongoing basis through the Forward Planning and Development Management functions of the Planning Department. In 2017 the Government announced plans to prepare new Wind Energy Guidelines to replace the 2006 Guidelines, however to date new guidelines have not been published.

Full regard is had to the circular from the Department of Planning, Housing and Local Government in August 2017 (Circular PL 5/2017) which provides details as to Interim Guidelines for Planning Authorities on Statutory Plans, Renewable Energy and Climate Change and an update in terms of the review of the Wind Energy Guidelines 2006.

### **Volume 6 Clare Renewable Energy Strategy 2017-2023**

### **Volume 7 Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary**

### **Volume 8 Mid West Regional Retail Strategy 2010-2016**

### **Volume 9 Joint Housing Strategy for Clare Local Authorities and Limerick City and County Councils 2010-2017.**

### **Volume 10 Environmental Appraisal of the Plan**

The provisions of Volumes 6-10 are being implemented on an ongoing basis through the Forward Planning and Development Management functions of the Planning Department

The above sets out to the Elected Members of Clare County Council the significant progress achieved in securing the objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 and is hereby submitted in accordance with Section 15 of the Planning and Development Act 2000, as amended.



**Pat Dowling**  
**Chief Executive**

**18<sup>th</sup> December, 2018**