



Clare County Development Plan 2022-2028 Review

To: Helen Quinn, A/Senior Planner
Subject: Development Plan Review
Via email: forwardplan@clarecoco.ie

Re: Pre-draft Submissions in preparation of Draft County Development Plan 2022-2028

Date: Monday 16th November 2020

Helen,

Please see below comments for consideration in the preparation of Draft County Development plan 2022 – 2028:

1. Connecting Communities:

- a) As one of the main service towns in Clare, Kilrush holds administrative functions and provides services and amenities to its residents and those from surrounding areas. This must be protected in order to reinforce the role Kilrush has as a primary service area for West Clare - enterprise, industry, educational, primary health care and the social needs of the West Clare area must be factored.
- b) West Clare Municipal District recognises the need for structured leadership teams within communities in the form of 'Community Councils' and 'Town Team'. Resources should be allocated to enable the formation and training, but also the long-term sustainability. A forum should be established, similar to the Clare Rural Development Forum, to ensure the needs of the communities are communicated to all Directors of Services and relevant Executives.
- c) **Local Communities:** The Greenway linking communities in Kilrush, Moyasta and Kilkee must be prioritised in the short term. The opportunity is huge to link these communities, both from an enterprise, tourism and social perspective. The successful implementation of the Greenway also provides accessibility to the Loophead Peninsula, Kilrush, Killimer and the county of Kerry via Shannon Ferries. Further capital investment is required to facilitate safe cycle and walkway infrastructure to compliment the offering.
- d) **Maritime Communities:** Linking maritime communities on the Shannon Estuary should be facilitated by the provision of marine infrastructure on the Clare shores of the Shannon Estuary, requires consideration, to possibly include slipways that facilitate safe recreational craft launching and pontoons/moorings that can be accessed at most levels of tide. The EU proposal for Motorways of the Sea (MoS) (https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/maritime/motorways_sea_en) should be explored in conjunction with the Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP) for the Shannon Estuary. For example, there is little to no safe slipway to launch a 6 metre vessel via trailer outside the commercial activities of Shannon Ferry Group, Killimer and Kilrush Marina. A comprehensive integrated approach must be considered to promote and drive recreational and commercial maritime activities while harnessing the natural assets, such as Scattery Island and deep-waters of the Shannon Estuary.
- e) Further examination and effort is required on progressing the proposed Kilrush Primary Health Care Centre, including site selection.

2. Enterprise:

- a) A focus should be put on supporting the renewable energy sector within the Shannon Estuary, and wider west coast. The Shannon Estuary has the potential to produce over 100Gw from its tidal flows, supported by vast wind energy generating potential west of Loop Head. Kilrush, Moneypoint Power Station and the lower Shannon Estuary may act as a best-in-class service centre for this industry.
- b) Further consideration is required to promote Kilrush as a Manufacturing Hub. Many businesses have invested significantly in infrastructure and facilities near and on Kilrush Business Park, which has been critical due to reduction in output/employment at Moneypoint Power Station. Various land banks to the North of Kilrush, on the Cooraclare Road may be considered for further development with the support of EI/IDA. A 'Kilrush Town Investment Prospectus' could be devised.
- c) Develop an evening trade / entertainment plan for the town with the aim of achieving Purple Flag status. This will require collaboration between retailers, hospitality providers, and Clare County Council.
- d) Support the promotion of local produce through the creation of a dedicated space for local arts / crafts to be displayed and marketed locally through pop-up shop initiatives.

3. Tourism:

- a) Resource and thought should be allocated to promoting Kilrush as a Destination Town and a gateway to the Loophead Peninsula. Visitors should be further captured while travelling the 'Dingle to Doolin' route.
- b) The 'Kilrush Town Investment Prospectus' would highlight the market need for an enhanced and increased visitor accommodation offering.
- c) The first step in regeneration / reimagining of Kilrush should be through tourism as a conduit. In recent years, the emergence of Scattery Island Tours, the West Coast Aqua Park among other established tourism businesses like the Dolphin Discovery and Vandeleur Gardens.

4. Public Realm & Amenity:

- a) To facilitate the linking of Kilrush Market Square to the Vandeleur Walled Gardens, Kilrush Marina and Cappa via an enhanced public realm offering. This must be carried out in a manner that is sympathetic to the existing historical fabric and contributes to the green infrastructure network, such as the proposed Greenway and Woodriver Walk.
- b) Resources are required to address both the public realm (the nature of spaces and routes) and the hard and soft landscape (landform, features and ecologies) on Market Square and Frances Street, Kilrush.
- c) Priorities for the public realm in the overall Kilrush Town settlement are:
 - To highlight unique heritage or other features;
 - To enhance the sense of place at gateways and key junctions;
 - To form transition areas on approach roads, both to calm traffic and enhance the arrival to Kilrush
- d) This is directly related to National Strategic Outcomes in the National Planning Framework - NS07 Enhanced Amenity and Heritage. 'It is intended that future development in Kilrush will include for enhanced public realm development in the town centre, building on the existing network of paths and walks'.
- e) Focus should be put on areas on which the Vacant Site Levy may apply, in particular areas that are noted Opportunity Site (OP) in the Kilrush Settlement Map (Jan 2017). The process must be examined to effectively implement the levy.
- f) Further review of Opportunity Sites (OP) in the Kilrush Settlement Map (Jan 2017) should be considered. 'Mixed use' zoning should be considered for some site which allows for a mix of uses such

as residential, hotels, medical facilities, offices, theatres, galleries, retail, bars and leisure/tourism related uses.

- g) Develop the water based amenities at Cappa and Alyevaroo, to promote accessibility to the beach for recreation and develop the use of the pier to its full commercial potential.
- h) Undertake a review of car parking throughout the town, notably the extensive areas of parking on Frances Street.
- i) Seek support for the development of a Youth Café or Youth Innovation Centre. This provides opportunity for cross-community cooperation involving the youth clubs, Men's Shed in the renovating of a café youth meeting space.
- j) Consider a Town Centre Renewal Pilot Programme focusing on town centre mixed use commercial/residential properties. This would showcase best practice views from an architectural, energy conservation and planning perspective.
- k) Identify and allocate resources to develop a multi-functional cultural centre to support the growing needs of West Clare.
- l) Expand on the offering provided by the Kilrush Sports Complex Astro-Turf Pitch to create a Kilrush Sports Hub.
- m) Community Park - support the development and site selection of a park within Kilrush Town, featuring a playground, age-friendly amenities, skatepark as well as green open areas for multifunctional use. This will enable low participation groups and disadvantaged populations to partake in sport and physical activity.
- n) The proper management of water and wastewater is a critical issue to the future growth and development of the settlements of Kilrush and Cappa.

Yours sincerely



ClIr Ian Lynch
Member of Clare County Council

