

Development Plan Review
Planning Department
Aras Contae an Chlair
New Road
Ennis
Co. Clare ,V95 DXP2

16 November 2020

**Submission to Issues Paper
Clare County Development Plan 2022-28**

Dear Sir/Madam,

I commend Clare County Council for the thought-provoking Issues Paper inviting submissions related to the Clare County Development Plan for the coming 7 years

I request that the Council take into consideration the points listed in the enclosed note as part of the development of the Plan. Whilst the points listed apply generally and should be considered as such, I have a particular focus on my home area of Killaloe and East Clare. I write both as an interested private individual and as a property investor and developer active in the area.

Should you require additional information or have any queries in relation to any matter mentioned please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,



Jonathan Harper



- **Key characteristics that define Co Clare...**

Clare is blessed with a diverse and inspiring natural and built heritage that, if properly protected and supported, can act as a magnet for tourism for many years to come. It also has a number of attractive towns and villages that can provide a good quality of life to their residents.

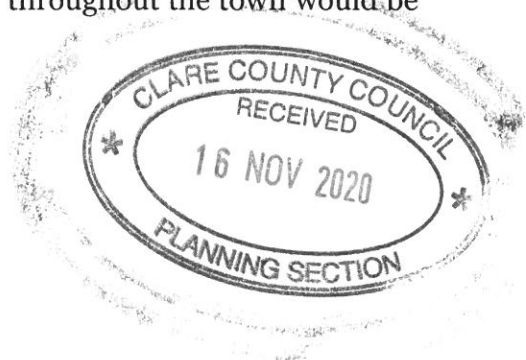
- **What makes an attractive residential environment?**

Careful consideration needs to be given to ways of encouraging the regeneration of housing in town and village centres. It is sad and off-putting to see many vacant, derelict and decaying properties on our main streets and in the hearts of communities when, with sympathetic development, these could provide viable housing for many groups of people from young families to the aged.

Killaloe is a centre of important architectural, historical and archaeological significance but currently suffers from having many vacant derelict buildings of differing types throughout the town. Development, refurbishment and re-purposing of these should be encouraged and promoted through the development management process in Clare County Council. This all needs to be achieved in a sensitive manner that is sympathetic to and enhances the pleasant siting and architecture of the town.

Place-making is also important. Housing needs to be situated in and amongst community facilities, small shops and businesses and green/public spaces. Ill-considered and poorly placed housing estates and supermarkets remove life from town centres and generate many car journeys to and from schools, shops, etc. Small towns need legible and safe pedestrian and cycle circulation routes as well as adequate parking outside of their immediate centre.

To this end, submissions were made in September 2020 on the Killaloe Ballina Enhancement & Mobility plan to which no responses have yet been seen. Killaloe has an engaged and enthusiastic community with whom Clare County Council should consult in a meaningful and proactive manner on the future development of the town and its public realm. The development of additional parking facilities in alignment with proposals for enhanced pedestrian and cyclist links throughout the town would be beneficial.



- **Infrastructure**

As recognised in the Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, infrastructure deficiencies have constrained development in Killaloe and proposals to upgrade the Ballina Waste Water Treatment Plant were being developed by Irish Water.

The continued lack of capacity of the WWTP will significantly hinder the opportunity for Killaloe to grow as a service centre and main town within East Clare and will constrain the supply of housing in Killaloe, for which there is a reasonably strong demand. Recent incidences of visible sewage overflows into the River Shannon in the town are unfortunate and will, unless urgently corrected, risk an adverse impact on tourism and the use of the river as an amenity by tourists and local residents. It is therefore requested that Clare County Council actively prioritise the development of additional WWTP capacity to serve the town as a matter of some urgency.

- **Natural Heritage & Biodiversity**

An attractive part of the green infrastructure of the county are the many pockets of small woodlands situated on farms, public and private land. This is particularly noticeable in East Clare.

In conjunction with support for the planting of more broadleaf woodland with naturally-occurring tree species (which I understand to be a national policy), I would like to see some form of increased protection for existing pockets of woodland against inappropriate 'land improvement'; and also the incentivisation of maintenance and reinstatement of hedgerows and planted wildlife corridors in order to link pockets of woodland. This will promote wildlife conservation and biodiversity and will protect the attractive nature of our landscape.

I would also like to see Clare County Council use their influence to help to prevent the unnecessary drainage of lands in East Clare, particularly within the Shannon catchment. This, together with additional tree planting, can be a key contributor to the amelioration of flooding in the lower Shannon area, allowing the lands to act as a natural reservoir for flood waters and slowing their release into the river.