

Clare County Development Plan 2023 Review Stage 1

Submission Joe Garrihy

In line with West Clare Strategic Plan adopted July 2020 (attached) & key objectives of sustainable living population and communities I submit the following specific ideas for consideration in the CDP review and development process.

This submission is a personal submission and not on behalf of the MD or other elected members.

The vision statement of the 2017 – 2023 plan seems to me to slightly weighted to external views & a tourism slant.

Suggest something like below added.

A County that has a vision and action plan for a bright sustainable future where native and stranger, its sons and daughters can choose to live and settle for life in well planned, environmentally sensitive, economically viable welcoming connected communities where all have equal access to affordable necessary services supported by public bodies under the leadership of responsive and progressive local government.

Population and Housing

- Immediate and priority focus should go to areas where the state has invested in Infrastructure while also redoubling efforts to secure for **KEY** (not every crossroads) settlements where there is a deficit
- Choice based solution can be ramped up with a better mix of affordable, social and unit mix needed to prevent one type dominating and lack of diversity
- Work with building capacity in key towns and villages to possibly leverage local Clare based housing associations
- **Vacant Rural** – Dereliction review & tax on vacancy, government incentives to refurbish – local housing DAC establishment.
- **Sensitive Environments.** International best practice is Leave No Trace approach with guided tours prioritised – Park and Ride approach from towns and villages – hub and spoke. Park Ranger resource & focusing services / accommodation / camping / parking sites in towns and villages – Win Win
- Balance between T&V and Rural housing – Can only in my view be compatible if a real need to live in open country or direct family / existing house is in place. I believe we as an LA or State must provide an alternative for people who wish to live in rural Clare and cannot get planning permission. I believe this can be achieved by providing serviced sites in towns and villages with infrastructure.

Rural Sustainable communities.



- Define more precisely and strategically what the key objectives of Clare Rural Regeneration Strategy means on the ground – prioritise sustainable pods/cooperating parishes and communities that are traditionally aligned through such as Secondary School catchment / Day Centre Catchment and clearly outline the needs of the Pod/Cooperating catchment in terms of infrastructure to ensure minimal duplication occurs in seeking or assessing public infrastructure / services and facilities while also having a priority view and ink to the overall region and county hierarchy in same context.
- The development plan to focus on the regeneration of Small Towns in our rural areas as the hub of a sustainable and vibrant rural communities.
- Soonest possible focus on shovel ready towns with in place best infrastructure capable of being flagship “Transition Towns “ for a sustainable rural population and community aligning with 10/15 minute town and cooperating catchment/pod approach.
- Work with local community , stakeholders in 5 selected “Transition Towns “ across the county to be flagship “Rural Settlements “ with the objective of marketing these Clare towns strongly to those families or people who wish to return and have the quality of life possible in rural Clare from abroad or Irish Cities. Build attractive living communities and market with same focus as we do WAW / Tourism.
- Develop and leverage existing key infrastructure in these selected towns to best level possible.
- Identify derelict and brownfield sites in these towns along with affordable or community/state owned assets with a view to overall regeneration plan to advance for development with Government , Private Sector and Community stakeholder partnership with the objective to create, facilitate and spark life and sustainable economic/social and environmental development.
- As it appears rural one off housing is becoming more difficult to deliver and sustain to a level necessary for rural success and will not be the answer to achieving critical population/services mass I propose a pilot scheme for developed sites in selected town or towns above to develop low density housing which is developed by the state / LA/ Local housing association as attractive alternative with possible incentives for those wishing to return to live in rural Clare (details of this idea are based on specific location and possible community / LA/ State /Private sector flagship project in a town with major underutilised infrastructure capable of immediate advancement on this initiative – Lisdoonvarna)
- Each Small town to have affordable housing scheme and mix of social and accessible housing schemes to benefit from and sustain the economic and social life of the area.
- Regeneration Scheme for derelict housing and repurposing of former commercial property in small towns necessary with CPO powers available to LA / State in this process.
- Identify and seek to develop supported living projects in each small town.
- Each small town must have a remote working hub/centre – these have the capacity to be the factory of the future and attract innovation / inward migration.

Climate Action

- Target selected settlements to be near 0 emissions / carbon neutral Transition Towns
- All carbon reduction and energy sustainability can be focused on the above model by development of near 0 emissions housing and retrofitting of existing by leveraging locally based sustainable energy communities.
- Specific focus on CDP on Community Owned Energy strategy and enablement
- Specific focus in the CDP on the county's Renewable energy strategy and guidelines.
- Specific Focus on strategic linkages for cycle and walking between settlements pods/cooperating parishes/small towns and villages – I propose we look closely at making many roads which can achieve this local access only and cycle/walking links between settlements with speed limits and special restrictions around motorised vehicular use.

Tourism

- Disperse Tourism across small towns and villages not on WAW – unintended consequence of WAW along with focus on peripheral and seaside attractions and destinations has led to bypassing of many towns and villages and a double negative of overcrowding/traffic and congestion on popular areas with little contribution to small towns and villages becoming derelict and losing identity / economic viability.
- Larger buses on roads not built or suitable is a major issue pre Covid – tail is wagging the dog with no disincentive or strategy to address to date – a clear policy , multifaceted accompanied by a marketing plan to steer tourism footfall where the county can benefit to ensure maximum and environment / community negative impact is minimised is urgently needed.
- Park and Ride circuit or based in Small Towns and Villages is one option – Hub and Spoke model expanded.
- Focus on identity and story of each small town and village (as above) and build experience / attraction around its uniqueness in overall concept and region as against peripheral attractions away from the towns and villages as appears to be the direction currently being taken.
- Protect our natural heritage by managing tourist activity and damage to key sites and habitats (major potential issues this year with the Burren and West Clare Coast / wild camping ect)
- Ensure Community use/benefit is ingrained in each major tourism project and investment.

Submission NO 154

West Clare Municipal District

Draft Strategy & Work Plan

DRAFT



Our Vision

Our vision is the regeneration and sustainability of our towns and villages with a view to making West Clare the best place to live, work and visit in that order of priority.

Our Role

Our role is to lead and ensure the delivery of a strategic plan in partnership with Clare County Council Executive, other relevant agencies and community stakeholders.

Background

Previous workshops attended by members were followed by the Covid 19 Public Health Crisis which exposed both weaknesses and challenges in the status quo but also demonstrated potential opportunities for West Clare. This has informed the strategic plan which follows. Our overarching objective is aligning the projects listed in the appendix of this document with national and county strategic priorities to maximise benefit to the MD area with specific focus on our towns and villages.

Our over-riding values

The members of the Municipal District are committed to:

- Provision of the council's services in an open, accountable and democratic framework
- Delivery of the necessary political leadership to plan for the future of the District
- Interaction with the senior staff of the council to ensure a shared approach to planning and delivery of the Council's services
- Placing a rural perspective at the heart of the planning of services and policies in the District
- Building a confident rural community across West Clare
- Maximising the great potential of the people of West Clare

The Council and supporting resources in the District

The Council is committed to support the social, cultural and economic development of West Clare. In that regard the values, objectives and priority actions set out in this Plan will be aligned to the Corporate Plan of the Council and will, where resources permit, be included in the annual budget and multi annual capital planning framework of the Council.

Working with our community

The Municipal District Members are committed to working with the towns, villages and rural communities that make up the District. In addition, the Members will work together to ensure that the needs of the Community are fully appreciated in the full Council and with the Council's key stakeholders and other public bodies operating within the area of the District.

Principle Themes and Work Programme

The District has agreed the following key strategic areas that will be central to the design and delivery of Council services in West Clare:

1. Focus on actions and policies that will support population growth throughout the District but with a clear focus on building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs for our rural areas as well as becoming self sustaining in their own right.
2. Support the delivery of council actions and working with other public bodies so that the people of the district have access to high quality government services at a local level.
3. Focus on the sustainable development potential of the District by give our communities a high quality of life through the application of the principles of wellness and ensuring sustainable towns and villages are at the heart of any development for West Clare.
4. Deliver on a number of underpinning priority actions and tasks to ensure that the District is able to grow its population, enhance quality of life and be recognised as a centre for lifelong well being.
5. Assess all of our infrastructure and proposed projects against the challenges posed by climate change and bio diversity loss to ensure our district is best placed to transition to low carbon sustainable communities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The members have agreed that any proposed project outside of those itemised in the attached appendix should be presented to the members for discussion at a meeting of the MD.

In addition, monitoring of implementation will be an item on each monthly meeting and subject to overall review on an annual basis.

Thematic based actions and tasks 2019-2025

Within the above framework the members have agreed the following priority actions for delivery over the life of the Council.

These are set out in the table below:

Principal Action	Theme	Timeframe	Key Performance Indicator
1. Population stabilisation/growth - ensuring sustainable towns and villages are at the heart of any development.	Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being	1. In place Q2, 2020	1. Development of policy on hubs with combined plan based upon the community plans prepared in the District
2. Delivery of sustainable tourism products based upon themed tourism projects in; -bio-diversity trails -wild tourism -coastal leering -burren at the heart of the product	Sustaining the economy	2. Agreement of project based action plan by end Q4, 2019	2. Capital development programme for identified projects in place
3. Linked cycleways/walkways	Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being	3. Agreement of action plan by end Q4, 2020	3. Capital development programme for identified projects in place.
4. Making access to information for our citizens	Supporting the delivery of council actions so that the people of the District have access to high quality local government services.	4. Inclusion in the Corporate Plan and work force plan of the Council end Q1, 2020	4. Policy adopted by Municipal District and at plenary level.
5. ICT role out in Clare CoCo and across the District	Supporting the delivery of council actions so that the people of the District have access to high quality local government	5. Inclusion in the Corporate Plan and work force plan of the Council end Q1, 2020	5. Policy adopted by Municipal District and at plenary level.

6. Network of water based resources to be put in place.	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs	6. Agreement of action plan by end Q4, 2020	2. Policy adopted by Municipal District and at plenary level.
7. Programme to refurbish older properties	Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being	7. In place Q2, 2020	7. Completion of audit of likely properties for refurbishment
8. Broadband	Sustaining the economy	8. In place Q2, 2021	8. Delivery plan agreed and under implementation
9. Building a new Moneypoint	Building a sustainable economy that is carbon neutral	9. In place Q2, 2021	9. Preparation of a masterplan for the area
10. Assess and maximise transport links across the MD	Working with Clare Local Link, NTA, other relevant stakeholders and communities to maximise transport services between settlements/rural areas of the MD by adding new and more strategic routes which will align with and add value to existing services while also addressing gaps and needs of the community and visitors to the area		

APPENDIX 1

PROPOSED PROJECT	OUTLINE	WEST MD STRATEGIC THEME
Carrigaholt Irish College	<p>Upgrading the building and facilities at Coláiste O' Chomhraide, Carrigaholt to serve as the accommodation centre and education hub of a strategic social enterprise programme based on collaborative partnerships with multiple heritage and history groups and agencies across West Clare. This will also ensure that heritage value of the building is safeguarded while returning the building to full use incorporating environmentally sound energy sources and infrastructure</p>	<p>Sustaining the local economy Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being</p>
Kilrush Heritage Skills	<p>Development of a Centre of Excellence for Heritage Skills in Kilrush, West Clare that will create employment and training opportunities across South West Clare and assist in addressing social and economic disadvantage. The first stage of this is being explored in relation to the "wet trades" (i.e. stone masonry; plastering; rendering) with a view to preparing a short course which can be developed over time.</p>	<p>Sustaining the local economy Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Lisdoonvarna Wellness Project / Stella Maris	<p>With a view to building an attractive sustainable resettlement package this project will involve upgrading and development of the building and facilities at Lisdoonvarna Spa Wells and Heritage & Biodiversity Park and Stella Maris. These will then serve as the centre points and education hub of a strategic social enterprise programme based on health and wellbeing and age-friendly services, building on Lisdoonvarna's very strong history and reputation of health and wellness and engaging in collaborative partnerships with multiple complimentary groups and agencies across North Clare. This will also ensure that heritage value of the buildings is safeguarded while returning the buildings to full use incorporating environmentally sound energy sources and infrastructure.</p>	<p>Sustaining the local economy Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>

Sustainable Energy Communities	Working with Loop Head Energy Action Plan (LEAP) as a lead party with a view to replicating across the MD, develop a model of community based sustainable energy appropriate to West Clare. Use just transition funding to replace the employment lost from the closure of Moneypoint	Building a sustainable economy that is carbon neutral
Blueway Project	Development of Plan for Blueway project along Estuary Way and Wild Atlantic Way	Expanding the product to ensure broader visitor experience throughout MD Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Greenway Project	Working with PMO to progress various phases	Sustaining the local economy Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Cliffs of Moher Strategic Plan	Development of a 20 year strategy to guide future upgrades at the Cliffs of Moher Visitor Experience.	Expanding the product to ensure broader visitor experience throughout MD
Burren Center Kilfenora and Town Enhancement plan	Regeneration of the Burren Interpretative Centre and Village Enhancement	Sustaining the local economy Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Corofin Vacant Building Pilot program using the Social Enterprise business model to reuse the vacant buildings in the village of Corofin	To counter act the physical decline in the village this program would explore and implement innovate ways to reuse vacant properties, (both Council and privately owned) within the town of Corofin. Using the Social Enterprise model, the polite would explore job opportunities around the development of community led projects such as a community café and local shop to sell and promote local produce, an innovative hub and training centre or the development of an artist space. This pilot program if successful could be replicated across other towns or villages.	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs

Corofin Visitor Centre	<p>The development of a Visitor Centre which would consist of:</p> <p>An Information Desk Interactive Exhibition to promote the Burren National Park Cafe/Craft Shop Park and Ride facility to the National Park</p>	<p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Cross Village Hub and Parlour	<p>Remote Working Hub and Development of Age Friendly Community Space in former school premises</p>	<p>Sustaining the economy</p> <p>Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being</p> <p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Labasheeda	<p>Remote Working Hub and Development of Micro Business Community Enterprise Space in community centre. Development of Shannon Estuary Cycle Way in conjunction with neighbouring villages with ultimate link to Kilrush cycle routes and West Clare Greenway.</p>	<p>Sustaining the local economy</p> <p>Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being</p> <p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Miltown Malbay	<p>Development of Car Park to include recreation space and hub of looped walk and ultimately of West Clare Greenway.</p>	<p>Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being</p> <p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Vandeleur Cycle Trail	<p>Development of cycle trails through Vandeleur Estate which would link into cycle trail around Kilrush and potentially the West Clare Greenway / Shannon Estuary Cycleway in the long-term</p>	<p>Enhance quality of life and become acknowledged as the centre for well being</p> <p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Ennistymon Town Project	<p>Failte Ireland Tourist Destination Town public realm project 2020.</p> <p>Development of parking plan with development of key areas for parking in town.</p> <p>Community Sports facility Blakes Corner PMO project Planning Authority Town project</p>	<p>Development of overall project for the town to ensure consistency and unity of approach</p> <p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>
Kilrush Town Plan	<p>Public realm development to key areas Town Square and Francis Street. Identification of funding streams for various stages.</p> <p>Additional elements to include development of Quay Mills building, Mars Cinema building, Wood River Walk, Signage Plan, Cappagh Enhancement Strategy</p>	<p>Development of key hub town</p> <p>Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs</p>

Doolin Pier Development & Village Enhancement	Improvement works to pier. Longer Term proposal for parking.	Doolin Enhancement Strategy development Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Wild Atlantic Way Improvements	Work with Failte Ireland on agreed improvements works along WAW	Ensure quality product maintained
Kilmihil	Support Peoples Park Project	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Tullaheer Bog	Development of lands as a wildlife sanctuary and/or a wildlife and nature-based outdoor recreation area	
Loop Head Lighthouse	Development of visitor experience. Active Travel to coincide with improved accessibility for cyclists and walkers	Expanding the product to ensure broader visitor experience throughout MD
Kilrush Multi Purpose sports centre	Development of multi-purpose sports and recreation centre in the town	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Lahinch Leisure World Project	Ensure completion of current project to best possible standard	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Cahercon	Development of location with other Directorates	
Michael Cusack Centre	Development of Going Well project as part of the Schools Programme.	
Social Housing Projects	Working with Social Directorate on pilot project	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs
Coastal Pathways	Assessment of potential coastal pathway development in West Clare	Building our towns and villages so that they can become supporting hubs

West Clare MD

Co Operating Catchments in Clare Rural Development Strategy & Viable Critical Mass of complementing clusters.

Objective of Clustering and this strategy

- Clearly identify Key settlements within the West Clare MD that logically and naturally are compatible and can have symbiotic development strategy along with unique identities to form a quality cluster for sustainable living and investment in infrastructure compatible and of a scale necessary and achievable in context of Local and National Plans.
- Identify and agree how these clusters and cooperating towns / villages / parishes link cohesively with Local and National Plans along with clear joined up strategy across the West Clare MD
- Identify and agree key projects within these clusters which should be prioritised to further analysis based on agreed criteria and invested in to bring to fruition or not based on
 - (a) Importance and potential for contributing to local cluster needs and potential to advance the vision within the MD / overall county / PFG Ireland 2040
 - (b) Based on in house analysis of resources needed to bring to fruition the selected projects to invest in their development in a balanced manner across the MD.

North Clare

Compatible Clusters existing but possibly not planning and operating strategically to optimum.

1: Miltown Malbay & hinterland (Hub Market Town shops and formal town structure) offering main community and overall facilities for the cluster with cluster & settlement for permanent population. **(Sec School, key to assist in defining sustainable catchment)**

Childcare Centre & Sproai / Community Multipurpose Hall Hub for the catchment, good sports facilities) Chuain and Chlair and Willie Clancy

Spanish Point (WAW Tourist focus)

Quilty (WAW and settlement, maritime opportunity)

Mullagh (Settlement?)

2: Ennistymon (Hub Market Town formal town structure) offering main infrastructure and overall facilities for Hinterland and wider NC Area (combined in this case with Lahinch for sports and amenity) for the cluster. **Sec Schools, Childcare Center, Digi Hub, NWFRC base, Hotel, link to Lahinch**

Lahinch (WAW Tourist Focus along with providing key amenity and facilities for the North Clare Region across tourist product along with living community in pool, beach, sports field ect.

Liscannor (WAW Tourist Town & Harbour / John Philip Holland link and identity)

3 Lisdoonvarna Gateway (Main town hub providing infrastructure , amenities accommodation base to cooperating parishes north of Ennistymon) **Sec School , Childcare Centre , Day Centre with potential for supported living affordable available lands adjacent to** the town. Large community owned asset base c (90 acres) for diversifying economy / remote working / community owned energy along with up to date waste water and infrastructure making the settlement ideal for transition Town to support vibrant and diverse living community in the region.

Hub of Wellness identity and brand to resonate across the region and county through Irelands original SPA Town with equal imminent risk to this being lost and restoration impossible.

Doolin (WAW Tourism focus and engine of tourism – gateway to Aran Islands/ Music & Cliffs of Moher ---- Liscannor Cliff Walk)

Kilfenora : City of the Crosses & Home of World Famous Ceili Band – the Burren Centre – possible settlement for permanent community and gateway to the burren.

Ballyvaughan – (WAW Tourism Focus, excellent pier and bay access and Education BCA)

New Quay – (WAW, Flaggy Shore & AG)

4 Corofin (Main town hub providing services and facilities for the hinterland and cooperating villages along with National Park Access gateway and visitor management , Historic noted for Lake fishing) Excellent living community

established in last 15 years which can be a model to which other towns should aspire.

Kilnaboy (National Park/ Mullagh Mor Access)

Carron (Centre point of the Burren & Cliffs of Moher UNESCO Global Geo Park Nat Park, MI Cusack Heritage and story)

Ruan (Dromore wood amenity)

Boston / Tubber (mid national park villages)

Toonagh ?

Big Projects Within North Clare LEA

(Regeneration / Brand and Identity Building) in context of PFG / Clare Rural Regen Strategy / Ireland 2040

West Clare MD to establish an MD Sustainable Energy Community Structure and replicate the successful Tipperary model across the MD

Action Proposed – Special Meeting before next MD meeting end of month with presentation by Gearoid Fitzgibbon of SEAI.

As a given

All pods / meitheal's / clusters

- Establish own strength / identity with hierarchy and acceptance that each core theme of identity is if possible not being scrapped for across the MD & County and same investment sources/brand confusion. Identify and focus on each areas strength and leverage that
- Pedestrian and cycle links within and between pods and settlements to be explored external to greenway overall plan (biodiversity trails)
- Sustainable Energy Communities roll out can align with the partnering/clusters/ Meitheal's and provide a community development theme to build community cohesion and capacity, trust and identity.
- Sewerage / Water basic infrastructure will progress with our continual pressure to deliver where needed.

- Regular MD roads and works will tie in to the strategy agreed whenever and wherever possible.
- Projects must be discussed with MD elected members before going forward to funding assessment to ensure aligning with understanding and aligning with the strategy.
- A strategy to support non County Council owned facilities / community owned / private owned necessary to achieve the goals agreed must be set out – currently community owned assets are deteriorating and being lost as they cannot compete with County Council resources or are not being supported to level necessary to succeed within the requirements of the schemes.
- Ongoing work with transport / rural link will provide better linkage
- Broadband roll out will be fast tracked.
- **Area 1 : West Coast Miltown Area**

Greenway Possible and links to Spanish Point and cluster of settlements by safe pedestrian and cycle ways

Linking area into the WAW

Adventure/Activity Zone at Mount Callan

- Chuain and Chlair Regen and Revitalisation with opportunity to leverage Music/Willie Clancy and heritage/culture /
- education element

Quilty ?

Area 2 Ennistymon area

Complete Lahinch Seaworld Complex Regeneration as Flagship for the region

Parking solutions & Complete Destination Town project

Expand Remote Working Hub due to demand

New Bridge and Regen associated

New Schools being provided and associated opportunity to combine sports facilities instead of duplicating.

Area 3 Lisdoonvarna Area – Burren Community Meitheal

Ireland's original SPA / Wellness Destination Town

Regeneration focussed on a living sustainable community and provide an authentic identity / story as part of Clare's identity as the Wellness Destination to both visit and live. As. Heritage and Biodiversity Park associated

Supported Living project and meals on wheels hub base. possible at Stella Maris Day Centre

Doolin Pier & Masterplan

Cliffs of Moher Coastal Walk

Burren Centre Regeneration

Area 4 Corofin Area Meitheal (Imeal Boirne)

Burren National Park service centre

Strong living population and potential

Development of full town plan

Amenity & Sports Park potential at Corofin Hall & School area.

Walking & Cycling route hub