

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Development Plan](#)
Subject: Variation No.1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029
Date: Wednesday 1 April 2026 12:20:55
Attachments: [sixmilebridge_objection_letter_v3.docx](#)

To whom it may concern,

I am submitting my objections to the planned zoning for the Sixmilebridge area

Best regards,

David.

1st April 2026

The Planning Department
Clare County Council
Áras Contae an Chláir
New Road, Ennis
County Clare

Re: Objection to Proposed Variation No. 1 – Additional Residential Zoning in Sixmilebridge (Amendments 3b-3 and 3b-4)

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to formally object to the proposed amendments to the Sixmilebridge settlement map and settlement plan under Proposed Variation No. 1 of the Clare County Development Plan 2023–2029, specifically Proposed Amendments 3b-3 (3b-3a through 3b-3h) and 3b-4 (3b-4a through 3b-4i).

These amendments propose a dramatic escalation of residential zoning in Sixmilebridge. Not only are all four Strategic Residential Reserve sites (SR1, SR2, SR3 and SR4) being converted to full residential zoning (R9, R13, R7 and R11 respectively), but the variation also proposes to zone additional, previously unzoned lands for residential development (R8, R10, R12), to extend the settlement boundary in multiple directions, and to designate a Long Term Strategic and Sustainable Development Site (LT1). The Strategic Residential Reserve text objective, which acknowledged that not all lands would be required for development to 2029 and is being deleted entirely.

This amounts to a wholesale expansion of Sixmilebridge's residential footprint at a time when the town's existing infrastructure, amenities and services have not kept pace with the growth that has already occurred. My objection is grounded in the following concerns, supported by evidence from the Clare County Development Plan 2023–2029 (Volumes 1, 3b and 8), the Municipal District of Shannon meeting minutes from July 2015, and the proposed variation itself.

1. Undelivered Infrastructure and Amenity Objectives

A review of the Development Plan and earlier Council records reveals a consistent pattern: objectives are set out in plan after plan for Sixmilebridge, yet remain undelivered. The following issues, many of which were raised as far back as 2015 at the Shannon Municipal District meeting, have still not been resolved:

Town Centre Traffic Bottleneck: The centre of Sixmilebridge acts as a severe bottleneck for traffic. All traffic passing through the town, whether travelling between Tulla and Shannon, Tulla and Limerick, or accessing local services and is funnelled through the narrow town centre bridge and surrounding streets. This single pinch point already causes significant delays during peak hours and at school times. The proposed variation, by zoning extensive new residential lands to the north, south, east and west of the town, will generate a substantial increase in traffic volumes that will inevitably be funnelled through this same bottleneck. Without the delivery of the relief road or any meaningful alternative route, the congestion problem will become significantly worse, affecting not only residents but also through-traffic and emergency vehicle access. The Development Plan itself acknowledges that the town

“currently experiences traffic congestion, exacerbated by motorists travelling from Tulla to both Shannon and Limerick,” yet no solution has been delivered.

Relief Road: The proposed link/relief road that was first identified as the Sixmilebridge Inner Relief Road in Volume 1 remains contingent on traffic surveys that have yet to be completed. This issue was raised at the Shannon Municipal District meeting in July 2015 when Councillor PJ Ryan sought traffic calming on the R462 Kilkishen to Sixmilebridge Road. Over a decade later, neither the relief road nor the traffic calming measures have been delivered. Yet the proposed variation now seeks to zone lands that will generate substantial additional traffic, including sites R7, R8, R10, R11 and R12, many of which require Traffic and Transport Assessments as a condition of development, this is an implicit acknowledgement that the existing road network cannot cope.

Convenience Retail – Lidl: Sixmilebridge is designated as a Tier 4 Level 1 retail town in the Development Plan, with a stated objective to maintain and enhance the quality of convenience goods provision and to reduce the need for residents to travel to larger centres for their weekly shopping. A Lidl store was proposed for the town, which would have been a significant and much-needed addition to the local retail offering, reducing car journeys to Ennis, Shannon or Limerick for basic shopping. However, no progress has been made on the delivery of this store. It is entirely contradictory to continue zoning vast tracts of land for housing, bringing hundreds of additional households into the town, while failing to deliver the basic retail services that the growing population requires. The absence of a modern convenience store of this scale means that Sixmilebridge residents remain dependent on car journeys to other towns for their main food shop, directly undermining the sustainability objectives of the Development Plan.

Pedestrian Infrastructure –The Development Plan acknowledges that the pedestrian environment in the town centre is of “mixed quality” and that the area is “car dominated.” Of particular concern is the pathway between Bridgekids and Crowe’s Shop, which is dangerously narrow and presents a genuine safety hazard for pedestrians, parents with buggies, wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties. Streetscape improvements, entry point enhancements, and traffic calming on the Limerick, Shannon and Tulla Roads are all listed as objectives in the plan but none have been delivered. The R462 road crossing is also dangerous as cars regularly speed on this road and its dangerous for children trying to cross the road.

Sixmilebridge to Bunratty Walkway: The proposed walkway between Sixmilebridge and Bunratty has been an objective across multiple plans. The current plan again lists it as an aspiration “subject to the requirements of the Habitats Directive.” Shannon’s settlement plan also references investigating linkages from Shannon to Bunratty and onwards to Sixmilebridge. No progress has been made.

Water Infrastructure: The plan acknowledges significant water loss from the Shannon/Sixmilebridge Regional Water Supply Scheme and states that the Castle Lake Water Treatment Plant upgrade “is planned and will be completed within the lifetime of the plan.” This means the upgrade has not yet been carried out, yet the proposed variation zones substantial additional lands for housing that will place further demand on an already strained water supply.

Local Transport Plan: Volume 1 of the Development Plan commits to implementing a Local Transport Plan for Sixmilebridge during the plan period. This has not yet

been completed. It is premature and irresponsible to dramatically expand residential zoning before this fundamental transport assessment has been carried out. The train services and bus services are very irregular and are not suitable for people who work in Shannon or Limerick

Town Centre First Masterplan: Sixmilebridge was selected as a national pilot for the Town Centre First Masterplan initiative. The settlement plan stated this was “due to be completed by June 2023.” It is unclear what tangible outcomes have been delivered from this exercise, or how its findings have informed the proposed variation.

2. The Proposed Variation is Premature and Disproportionate

The original Development Plan zoned 8.05 hectares for residential use, 13.11 hectares for Strategic Residential Reserve, and 7.87 hectares for mixed use in Sixmilebridge. The Strategic Residential Reserve was specifically intended to acknowledge that not all lands would be needed for development to 2029 and to allow for phased, sequential expansion.

The proposed variation dismantles this approach entirely. All Strategic Residential Reserve lands are being rezoned to full residential, the SRR text objective is being deleted, additional previously unzoned lands are being brought into the settlement boundary for residential development, and a Long-Term Strategic site is being designated. This is not a minor adjustment, it represents a fundamental change to the scale and pace of development planned for Sixmilebridge.

The proposed variation itself acknowledges the infrastructure deficit by requiring Traffic and Transport Assessments for nearly every new residential site (R7, R8, R10, R11, R12, R13). For site R10, the variation states that “development shall not proceed at this site, unless safe connectivity to the town centre can be demonstrated.” This is a clear admission that such connectivity does not currently exist. Given the town centre bottleneck described above, it is difficult to see how safe connectivity can be demonstrated for any of these sites without the delivery of the relief road and significant upgrades to the town’s road network.

3. Sixmilebridge is Becoming a Housing Estate, Not a Town

The cumulative effect of continued residential zoning without the delivery of supporting infrastructure and amenities is that Sixmilebridge is being transformed into one large housing estate rather than developing as a balanced, sustainable town. New residential areas have been developed to the south and northeast, yet the town centre remains car-dominated, congested, and lacking in modern pedestrian facilities, adequate parking, a modern convenience retail store, recreational amenities and community infrastructure.

The proposed variation will exacerbate this problem significantly. Housing without matching investment in amenities, services and infrastructure does not create a community. It creates a dormitory settlement. Residents are forced to drive to Shannon, Ennis or Limerick for basic grocery shopping, for secondary school, and increasingly even to navigate through their own town centre due to congestion. The residents of Sixmilebridge deserve better.

4. Request

I respectfully request that Clare County Council:

1. Reject or substantially reduce the proposed residential zoning amendments for Sixmilebridge under Proposed Variation No. 1 until such time as the outstanding infrastructure and amenity objectives from this and previous plans have been delivered, including the relief road to address the town centre bottleneck, traffic calming, town centre parking, pedestrian improvements (including the dangerous pathway between Bridgekids and Crowe's Shop), the walkway to Bunratty, and the water supply upgrade.
2. Retain the Strategic Residential Reserve designation and the phased approach to development, rather than converting all reserve lands to full residential zoning in a single variation.
3. Complete the Local Transport Plan for Sixmilebridge before any further residential zoning is approved, as committed to in the Development Plan, with regard to the town centre bottleneck and the capacity of the existing road network.
4. Ensure that the delivery of the Lidl store, or an equivalent modern convenience retail facility, is progressed as a priority to serve the existing and future population, in line with the Development Plan's own retail objectives for the town.
5. Provide a clear and transparent timeline for the delivery of each of the outstanding objectives listed above, with accountability mechanisms to ensure they are not simply carried forward into another plan cycle without action.
6. Ensure that the findings of the Town Centre First Masterplan are published and that any further zoning decisions for Sixmilebridge are informed by its recommendations.

The people of Sixmilebridge deserve a town that grows in a balanced and sustainable manner, not one that is used as a location for housing targets while the infrastructure, amenities and services that make a place liveable are left perpetually in the planning stage. The proposed variation, if adopted in its current form, will further entrench this imbalance and risks turning Sixmilebridge into little more than a commuter dormitory.

I look forward to your response on this matter.

Yours faithfully,

David Cushley

