

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Development Plan](#)
Subject: Submission to Variation No.1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029
Date: Tuesday 7 April 2026 23:16:28

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to make a formal observation / objection to Proposed Variation No. 1 to the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029.

We are residents directly affected by the proposed zoning changes.

We strongly object to:

- The proposed new Residential zonings R10, R12 and R13 on and bordering the L7024 (the narrow rural road where we live, with these sites on both sides and R10 coming closest to our home).
- The proposed Long Term Strategic and Sustainable Development Site LT1 (in very close proximity to the R470 which is at the top of the L7024, LT1 lies behind existing houses on the opposite side of the main road/ R470).

These are detailed in the proposed amendments to Volume 3b Shannon Municipal District Settlement Plans (Sixmilebridge) and the accompanying maps under Proposed Variation No. 1. We also object to the text and objectives proposed for these sites in Volume 3b.

Reasons for objection:

1. Excessive quantum of zoning in Sixmilebridge, contrary to the Core Strategy and Settlement Hierarchy (Volume 1, Chapters 3 & 4)

Sixmilebridge has already been allocated and in many cases exceeded, its fair share of residential zoning under the Core Strategy and the Settlement Hierarchy for Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area settlements.

The proposed Variation dramatically increases the amount of residentially zoned land in Sixmilebridge, from approximately 8 hectares to around 32 hectares in some summaries, which is more than 300% of an increase in scale. The conversion of existing Strategic Residential Reserve (SRR) lands to full Residential zoning, combined with the addition of new greenfield sites (including R10, R12, R13 and LT1), represents over-zoning in a predominantly rural location.

This is excessive for Variation No. 1 and is not justified by the Serviced Land Assessment / Settlement Capacity Audit. It contravenes national policy on compact growth (NPO 3, NPF) and the Development Plans Guidelines, which require zoning to be evidence-based, sequential, and proportionate.

The proposed R10, R12 and R13 zonings on/near the L7024, together with LT1, would enable an estimated additional 70-120 dwellings in total (based on typical densities of 20–30 units per hectare for edge-of-settlement sites in small towns under the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines 2024). R10 alone, being closest to our home, could accommodate approximately 45 dwellings. This further compounds the over-zoning in a rural area already served by narrow roads and inadequate infrastructure.

LT1, while currently “long-term”, effectively clears the path for future residential development in the next plan cycle, the review of which will commence in less than 2 years’ time. Zoning it now locks in unsustainable expansion.

It is important to note that while in principle we do not disagree with the need for more housing in the area, we are very concerned about the lack of joined-up thinking and forward planning in relation to these proposed zones on the L7024. Significant new residential development is being added without properly coordinating it with essential infrastructure upgrades, local services, or a realistic assessment of the cumulative impacts on our narrow rural roads and village facilities.

2. Inappropriate location on a narrow rural road with no supporting infrastructure causing traffic, health & safety impacts

The L7024 is a very narrow rural road with agricultural land on both sides. It is entirely unsuitable for additional housing traffic and can take at most one vehicle at a time in places, with very limited opportunity for passing, especially from the junction heading towards Ballysheen. The proposed sites R10, R12 and R13 would generate significant additional vehicle movements on this already constrained network, with R10 impacting our home most directly.

Sixmilebridge’s roads, including approaches to Ennis, Shannon and Limerick are already overloaded. Most residents commute for employment, and the village experiences regular congestion. Poor street lighting and footpaths in poor condition further exacerbate pedestrian safety risks. Additional housing will create serious health and safety hazards for existing residents, farm traffic, cyclists and emergency services.

This directly conflicts with the Plan’s objectives for sustainable transport, road safety and sequential development (CDP objectives in Chapters 4, 11 and 19, and the Limerick-Shannon Metropolitan Area Transport Strategy). We note the objective in the Proposed Variation that “development shall not proceed at this site unless safe connectivity to the town centre can be demonstrated”. Given the quantum of zoned and undeveloped lands already available in Sixmilebridge, a more sustainable approach would be to remove this zoning for now, allow the under-construction residential development adjacent to R10 to complete, and then properly assess traffic, access and connectivity impacts before the next plan review.

3. Lack of policing infrastructure and rising crime resulting in further community safety concerns

Sixmilebridge does not have a fully functioning Garda station with adequate staffing or regular visible Garda presence in and around the village. Local representatives and residents have repeatedly called for increased Garda resources and a fully manned station to address ongoing criminal activity. Recent crime statistics show a significant 34% increase in reported crimes at Sixmilebridge Garda station in 2024. This is the highest increase of any station in Clare, with theft being a particularly common offence.

In practice, local residents must often ring 999 because the Sixmilebridge station is not manned for the majority of the day or night. Calls to Shannon Garda station frequently go unanswered due to understaffing, and there are often no squad cars available in Sixmilebridge or indeed Shannon to attend incidents in the area. This results in Gardaí having to be deployed from Ennis, which in our personal experience can take up to 2 hours to reach the scene. Further residential development on R10, R12, R13 and LT1 would add substantially to the local population without any corresponding improvement in policing

capacity. This would place even greater strain on already overstretched Garda resources, heighten risks to community safety, and exacerbate existing crime issues. Such development is contrary to proper planning and sustainable development, including objectives in the Clare County Development Plan relating to community safety and the broader goals of the Clare Local Community Safety Partnership.

4. Severe strain on local services, amenities and the road network including the planned Lidl supermarket

Sixmilebridge already lacks basic services to support its current population:

- No secondary school, with hundreds of students living in the village. Approximately 400 students are bussed daily from Sixmilebridge to schools in Shannon, Ennis and Limerick, where services are already at peak capacity and families face ongoing issues with waiting lists and transport. This figure does not include students that are driven to the schools in Shannon, Ennis or Limerick.

- Only 2 GPs

- No primary health care centre.

- Only 1 extremely busy pharmacy.

- No filling station.

- Services and amenities (including water, wastewater, waste management, community facilities) are barely adequate.

- Lack of dedicated facilities for children and young people. Sixmilebridge has very limited playground space, and what exists is often in very poor condition or subject to vandalism. There are no proper youth facilities, teen spaces or organised activities for older children and teenagers aside from volunteer run GAA/Soccer activities. This leaves young people with few safe, local options and contributes to rising anti-social behaviour. Adding many more houses through R10, R12, R13 and LT1 and other zones would increase the number of children and teens without any corresponding new playgrounds, parks or youth amenities, putting further pressure on already stretched community resources.

- Bus services already at breaking point during peak school hours. The scheduled morning services to Shannon (particularly the 7:50, 7:55 and 8:25 scheduled services) are so heavily used by secondary students that fewer than 20 seats are typically left available for the general public. If members of the public board the bus first, students are often left standing at the side of rural roads with no other way to get to school once parents have left for work. There are no bus shelters anywhere in or around Sixmilebridge, so students (and other waiting passengers) are fully exposed to the elements in all weather. With hundreds of additional residents likely from the new housing on R10, R12, R13 and LT1 and other zones, these peak-time capacity problems will only get worse. There is no evidence of planned extra services, new stops or shelters.

The village's road network is already experiencing significant congestion, particularly at the main crossroads in the square and on the single constrained bridge. Most essential services (chemist, medical practices, cafés, and the new Lidl) are on one side of the village, so new residents on the L7024 side will have to cross the bridge repeatedly to access these amenities & services. The approved smaller-than-standard Lidl store, located adjacent to the main crossroads, will attract extra traffic from surrounding rural areas. It is unlikely that the new Lidl will be of sufficient size to support the population if all proposed zones around the village are approved for residential housing.

When combined with the substantial extra housing proposed through R10, R12, R13, LT1

and other zonings, this will place unsustainable pressure on the already overloaded roads, footpaths and infrastructure. Back roads like the L7024 also take the brunt of diverted traffic during incidents on the M18 or protests. Further residential development will exacerbate these problems without corresponding upgrades, contrary to the “infrastructure-led” approach required by the Core Strategy, the Sustainable Residential Development and Compact Settlements Guidelines (2024), and the Settlement Capacity Audit. The Plan must not permit development that cannot be adequately serviced within the plan period.

5. Failure to align with environmental, biodiversity and climate objectives

While the primary concerns are traffic, health & safety, community policing and over-zoning, the proposals also conflict with:

- Clare County Biodiversity Action Plan 2025–2031 and the local Sixmilebridge Biodiversity Plan (wet grassland, hedgerows and agricultural habitats in the vicinity support local biodiversity and act as natural flood buffers).
- Clare County Climate Action Plan 2024–2029 – car-dependent development on a rural road with poor public transport links will increase emissions and undermine climate goals.

The sites are not in line with the Plan’s environmental protections or the requirement for Biodiversity Net Gain.

Conclusion and request

The proposed R10, R12, R13 and LT1 zonings (and the associated text in Volume 3b) are premature, unsustainable and contrary to the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. They materially contravene multiple objectives of the Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029, national and regional planning policy, and the environmental/biodiversity/climate framework.

We respectfully request that the Elected Members reject the proposed rezonings R10, R12, R13 and LT1 and associated text/objectives in Volume 3b for Sixmilebridge. These sites would enable premature and unsustainable greenfield expansion on constrained rural roads without adequate supporting infrastructure, contrary to the Core Strategy, compact growth requirements, and the proper planning and sustainable development of the area. Sixmilebridge has already contributed significantly to housing supply targets. Priority should instead be given to completing existing developments and upgrading services/roads before further edge zoning.

We would be happy to discuss this further or provide additional local evidence (photos of the L7024/R470, traffic observations, etc.).

Yours sincerely,
Aoife Keogh & John Reddin

