

## West Clare

### **Draft Wellbeing Vision Statement for County Clare:**

Clare is a county that values, protects and restores its unique landscape, environment and biodiversity, where sustainable livelihoods are prioritised for this and future generations and where citizens, migrants, ethnic minorities and people of all abilities, age-groups and genders are able to reach their potential in an atmosphere of support, respect and inclusion, and where Local Government is open, transparent, accountable and committed to reducing poverty and marginalisation within the County; our vision is for a County to be part of and a County to be proud of.

### **Draft Wellbeing Vision Statement for West Clare Municipal District:**

The West Clare Municipal District is the largest district in County Clare stretching from the Loop Head peninsula north along the Atlantic coast as far as Ballyvaughan and New Quay and east along the Shannon Estuary as far as Tiermaclane and Islandavanna on the outskirts of Ennis. The topography and landscapes of the municipal district are highly contrasting from the rugged Atlantic seaboard, to the Slieve Callan uplands, the Burren, the Shannon Estuary, expansive farmlands and urban areas. The West Clare Municipal District, with a population of 34,449 people, is an area of great contrast and diversity. There are a number of key towns in the municipal district, such as Kilrush, Ennistymon and Miltown Malbay, which act as main service providers in the area. These large towns are supported by a number of smaller towns and villages that provide services and amenities to visitors to the area, local residents and residents of the surrounding rural areas.

## 1. Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

People and communities across West Clare MD are actively involved in the democratic process and in the decisions that affect their lives. People are equipped and encouraged to participate meaningfully in local government and other decision-making structures.

Local government is well funded, fully transparent and accountable on all issues. *There are local community level forums and town hall style meetings where communities can make collective decisions.* *There is* fair child care and maternity leave for Councillors. Meetings of Clare County Council, both plenary and committee, are live-streamed over the internet.

Genuine public consultation is an integral and fundamental part of Clare County Council's mission. The views of people and community organisations *in West Clare are actively sought, listened to, valued and incorporated in policy-making.* *Decisions on capital spending are informed and transparent.*

People are well-informed and equipped to understand democracy and participation, through the school curriculum and also public education.

Democratic structures favour the interests of people and communities over those of *business where they differ*, and also ensure that minority voices are represented.

## 2. Economy, Work and Resources

West Clare is a dynamic, attractive place to live, work and visit; sustainable livelihoods are prioritised; and people are doing fulfilling work that benefits their community. There is high-quality infrastructure, broadband and access to education and amenities.

Locally owned businesses are supported to serve local needs and keep money in the community. People **including disabled people** are supported to work locally, through remote working hubs, high-speed broadband, high quality public transport and other infrastructure, resulting in revitalised communities and strong local economies. **A circular economic model is prioritized over a growth based one. Low impact eco-tourism benefits the host communities and those visiting.**

Environmentally friendly farming and organic food production are supported. Tourism policy prioritises the domestic market and environmentally sustainable tourism. There is support for community-owned businesses, community farms, farm shops and community cafes. **The co-operative and social enterprise models are also supported.**

There is strong protection for workers' rights and conditions including disabled workers, including family-friendly, flexible working hours, affordable childcare and a decent living wage. Excellent training opportunities are available, especially for people who are involuntarily unemployed. ***The Local Authority and other large employers have themselves provided employment opportunities for those from migrant, Traveller and disadvantaged communities.***

### 3.Environment and Sustainability

West Clare's natural environment, biodiversity, *coastline* and heritage are valued and protected. Land use and farming are organised in a way that produces affordable, nutritious food, *regenerates* the environment and gives farmers and food producers a decent living. Organic food production for local sale is supported. People are educated and encouraged to grow their own food.

Our electricity is generated from renewable energy **which is produced from projects that were developed with community consent**. Local and national policy strongly favours community-owned wind energy and microgeneration. Homes and public buildings are energy efficient.

Car dependency has been greatly reduced through major investment in public transport and cycling and walking routes. Consumption and waste are both reduced through the use of shared resources. Re-use and recycling are encouraged and facilitated.

Biodiversity is protected and promoted, through the planting of native broad-leaved trees, the banning of harmful pesticides and herbicides, reduced use of chemical fertilisers and public green spaces being left unmowed.

People are empowered to take responsibility for their natural environment through education and initiatives such as community clean-up days and community gardens. The climate and biodiversity crises are front and centre in all local authority policy and strategy documents.

#### 4. Health (Physical & Mental)

Everyone in West Clare has access to a high standard of affordable, locally-available healthcare – both physical and mental. There is awareness, understanding and support for those dealing with mental health difficulties and skilled well-resourced support is available for those suffering from addiction. Ennis Hospital has been upgraded so that people from West Clare have access to A&E and Maternity Care, and GPs are available within a reasonable distance.

The role of the natural environment in promoting good health is recognised, and outdoor activities are promoted and spaces such as public parks are available in each town, including through dedicated cycle and walking paths and safe access for all to the beaches across the MD. Everyone has access to quality recreational facilities and affordable exercise classes.

There are policies and resources in place to reduce isolation and to promote inclusive and supportive communities, including more non-commercial social spaces and access to public transport and free rural transport.

Healthcare provision in Clare is locally informed and evidence-based. People with disabilities and special needs are provided with appropriate services and can fully participate in society. Carers are valued and supported to maintain their own quality of life.

## 5. Social & Community Development

West Clare is a place that embraces diversity and promotes social inclusion. People of all ages and backgrounds feel involved and integrated in the community. Safe, well-serviced public spaces, community centres and social settings are accessible to all. Our community works together to ensure that everyone is valued and supported to realise their potential.

Older people are valued and included and use their skills to the benefit of the whole community and younger people have the opportunity to participate in the decisions made which affect them.

West Clare has strong community development organisations that are respected and work to empower the community as a whole. As well as being included within the mainstream organisations the Traveller community in West Clare has Traveller-led specific support organisations to help their community reach their potential and celebrate and develop their cultural heritage.

Everyone in West Clare has access to a suitable home in a safe and well-connected community. The county is open to all through free or affordable public transport.

The contribution of voluntary and community groups is recognised and valued, and they are supported and resourced for their work in creating and maintaining inclusive communities. The voices and contributions of all in our community are sought, listened to and valued equally, including youth, older people, migrants, LGBT, people living with disabilities and others.

People with disabilities are facilitated and supported to live active lives as full members of the community.

## 6. Values, Culture and Meaning

West Clare is an open, welcoming and inclusive community, a place from which many have emigrated and a place that welcomes migrants. **Our West Clare communities have a strong sense of place and tradition which makes them custodians and caretakers of the landscape and culture for future generations. Our communities are open to change and welcome diversity with inclusion and belonging as core values.**

Our community prides itself on a strong culture of volunteering and neighbourliness. There is active learning and skill sharing between generations, cultures and identities.

Community activities are inclusive and promote equality and interaction between groups. Festivals, sporting events and celebrations bring together people from different backgrounds and cultures and allow for cultural exchange. **Artists, musicians, and crafts people are valued and enrich our communities whether they live in or visit them.**

Traditional Irish culture, including language, music, dancing and storytelling, is valued and celebrated. **Traditional crafts and skills are promoted and all aspects of our Irish and multicultural heritage are recorded and celebrated.**