

County Clare: **Draft** Vision for Community Wellbeing, December 2020.

**Summary Vision:**

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.



## 1. Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

People and communities across Co Clare 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. 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 Clare are actively sought, listened to, valued and incorporated in policy-making.

People are well-informed and equipped to understand democracy and participation, through the school curriculum and also public education. Participation is fostered through local 'town hall' style meetings and community-level forums.

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

Community organisations are also transparent and accountable and are supported to meet reasonable governance standards.

## 2. Economy, Work and Resources

Clare is a dynamic, attractive place to live, work and visit. Sustainable livelihoods are prioritized, workers' rights are protected and there is high-quality infrastructure, education and amenities.

Locally owned businesses are supported to serve local needs and keep money in the community. 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.

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 model is also supported.

There is strong protection for workers' rights and conditions including those of disabled people who wish to join the workforce, including family-friendly, flexible working hours, affordable childcare, a decent living wage. Excellent training opportunities are available, especially for people who are involuntarily unemployed.

### 3. Environment and Sustainability

Clare's unique natural environment, biodiversity and heritage are valued and protected. Land use and farming are organised in a way that produces affordable, nutritious food, protects 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. Local and national policy strongly favours community-owned wind energy and microgeneration and all such projects should be developed with community consent. 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 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.

The role of the natural environment in promoting good health is recognised, and outdoor activities are promoted, including through dedicated cycle and walking paths across the county. 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

We are a county 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 and social settings are accessible to all. Our community works together to ensure that everyone is valued and supported to realise their potential and to secure the best possible outcomes for all.

Everyone in Clare has 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, LGBTQ, 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

Clare is an open, welcoming and inclusive community, a place from which many have emigrated and a place that welcomes migrants. Inclusion and belonging are core values; the value of diversity is promoted. Pride in Irish culture co-exists with a respect for and acceptance of all cultures.

Our community prides itself on a strong culture of volunteering and neighbourliness. Active learning between generations, cultures and identities is acknowledged and valued.

Community activities are inclusive and promote equality and interaction between groups. Festivals and celebrations bring together people from different backgrounds and cultures and allow for cultural exchange.

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 heritage are recorded and celebrated.