

Ennis

County Clare Vision for Community Wellbeing

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.

Vision for Community Wellbeing Ennis Municipal District

The Ennis Municipal District, with a population of 33,010 people, encompasses the town of Ennis, Clarecastle, and the surrounding villages of Barefield, Kilmaley, Quin, Clooney, Kilnamona and Toonagh and a vibrant network of clusters and countryside areas. Ennis Municipal District is located in an identified Working Landscape and is centrally located on the main economic growth corridor in the Mid-West Region.

1. Participation, Democracy and Good Governance

People and communities in the Ennis Municipal District 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 Ennis MD are actively sought, listened to, valued and incorporated in policy-making.

Decisions on policy and allocation of resources are evidence-based and this evidence is publicly shared. The local authority values and facilitates public participation including through supporting minority communities to engage. LA staff are encouraged and rewarded for securing participation from the community and plans remain open to change while such consultations or engagement happens.

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

Ennis is a dynamic, attractive place to live, work and visit; sustainable livelihoods are prioritised; workers' rights are protected; and there is high-quality infrastructure, and opportunities for lifelong education.

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 which operate on a circular economic model. **Cooperatively owned business models support artisans, craft workers, service providers and others to collaborate for mutual gain. Businesses strive to cooperate and collaborate in Ennis MD for the benefit of the whole community.**

Environmentally friendly farming, **urban farming** and organic food production are supported. Tourism policy prioritises the domestic market and environmentally sustainable tourism and encourages Clare people to make full use of the experiences and places in their own county. **Food and cultural tourism have been enhanced in Ennis MD and visitors spend time in the town and its environs.** 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 family-friendly, flexible working hours, affordable childcare, a decent living wage. **Disabled and other marginalised groups people are fully integrated in the workforce.** Excellent training opportunities are available, especially for people who are involuntarily unemployed.

3.Environment and Sustainability

Ennis MD's 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. **Urban farming and community gardens are available.** 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 projects are only developed with community consent.** Homes and public buildings are energy efficient. **Our waterways are protected from untreated wastewater and agricultural run off and there is a task force to monitor this.**

Car dependency has been greatly reduced through major investment in public transport, including micro transport and cycling and walking routes. **There are electric car charging points available within easy reach of all areas of the MD and a national battery recycling scheme has been established to reuse electric car batteries.** Consumption and waste are both reduced through the use of shared resources, community composting facilities and re-use, repair and recycling are encouraged and facilitated.

Biodiversity is protected and promoted, through the planting of native broad-leaved trees within Ennis urban area and on publicly owned land. Harmful pesticides and herbicides are no longer used except under license when necessary to deal with invasive species. There is a reduced use of chemical fertilisers and public green spaces are left mostly 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 Ennis MD 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. **A holistic view of health and mental health which includes an understanding of the need for social and recreational opportunities for people at all stages of life informs all policy decisions.**

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.

Air quality in the Ennis MD is consistently good and people whatever their financial circumstances live in accommodation which is warm and energy efficient and has been retrofitted where necessary.

There are policies and resources are in place to reduce isolation and to promote inclusive and supportive communities, including more non-commercial social spaces and access to public transport **such as hop on hop off buses** connecting Ennis town and its surrounding areas.

Healthcare provision in Ennis is locally informed and evidence-based. **Ennis hospital has been upgraded to serve all but the most specialised needs.** 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

Ennis MD is a diverse community. It embraces this diversity and promotes social inclusion. People of all ages and backgrounds feel involved and integrated in the community and there are plans made every year to combat isolation and loneliness. Safe, well-serviced public spaces and social settings both indoor and outdoor 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 Ennis MD has a suitable home in a safe and well-connected community.

The town centre has a range of accommodation including co-housing schemes where older and single people can live in the centre of their communities. The municipal district and wider county with its many natural amenities is open to all through free or affordable public transport. People with disabilities are facilitated and supported to live active lives as full members of the community.

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.

6.Values, Culture and Meaning

Ennis MD 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. There is active learning between generations, with older people fully included in the social life of the MD. There are variety of cultures and identities acknowledged and valued in particular **Traveller culture and history is part of the school curriculum and the Traveller contribution to music, craft and storytelling is acknowledged and celebrated in Ennis MD.**

The practice of institutional living for International Protection Applicants and of Disabled people living in nursing homes has ended and instead people live in the community with any supports they need made available to them.

There are a range of community activities which are inclusive across differences of class, age, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality and ability. These promote equality and interaction between groups according to their interests. Festivals and celebrations including street art and music bring together people from different backgrounds and cultures and allow for cultural exchange and cultural regeneration. **Young people are valued and their views and opinions are given weight when decisions are being made.**

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, emigrant and inward migrants' heritage are recorded and celebrated.**