



SUBMISSION TO CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL ON
THE DRAFT VISION AND HIGH-LEVEL GOALS OF THE
CLARE LOCAL AND COMMUNITY PLAN
2023-2029

Thursday 22nd June 2023

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Clare PPN Vision Statement

‘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 and age-groups and genders are able to reach their potential in an atmosphere of support, respect and inclusion, where Local Government is open, transparent and accountable and committed to reducing poverty and marginalisation. Our vision is for a county to be part of and a county to be proud of.’

Introduction to Clare PPN:

Clare PPN is a network of 360 community & voluntary, environmental and social inclusion groups from Clare. Clare PPN has three 'Colleges' which gather the member groups in terms of their interests and activities – these are environmental college, social inclusion college and community and voluntary college. Clare PPN exists to facilitate the formal participation by the community sector in Clare County Council's decision-making structures and to serve as a support and information sharing network for the Community and Voluntary Sector in Clare. It is funded jointly by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Clare County Council but is autonomous and its activities are directed by its members through an elected secretariat.

Methodology

- As part of a Dormant Accounts Funded Project on participation, working with project partners CLDC & LCETB and with contracted researchers TASC, the Think Tank for Action on Social Change, Clare PPN held a series of affected led focus groups in collaboration with Family Resource Centres throughout the county. Those accessing FRC services are likely to be experiencing one or more kinds of socio-economic exclusion and typically include people who experience discrimination on the basis of class.
- Focus groups were also held specifically with young men from the Traveller community and those displaced due to the ongoing war in Ukraine.
- Climate action and public travel were discussed in two separate focus groups.
- Training and brainstorming sessions were held in each municipal district, where the concepts of a just-transition and socio-economic rights were explored.
- The participation project is ongoing and will consult further with other targeted communities before completion of the LECP public consultation processes are complete.
- Clare PPN member groups participated in the above public sessions the input gathered has helped to inform this submission.

Prior Input:

Clare PPN, through its representatives on the Economic Development SPC and LCDC has participated in forming the draft High-Level Goals, Vision Statement and Objectives. We very much welcome that aspects of our input which was gathered from our work with communities and groups all over Clare, are included within the explanatory document. The suggestions below include modifications which were not made at that time and new recommendations from our ongoing work in the community and with marginalised groups.

GOAL 1 – Healthy Equitable Inclusive Community

Please note that in the explanatory text under Goal 1 ‘Citizen’ should be replaced with ‘residents’ or ‘all people’ - Citizen usually denotes someone with citizenship and several thousand people in Clare have residency status but are not citizens of Ireland.

We request as we did previously that when amending the draft following this consultation that the following explanatory text is included under Goal 1:

‘NB The use of equitable and inclusive above refers to the necessity of reflecting within policy, resource allocation and action, the needs, views and potential of the following:

- *the population of women and girls in Clare*
- *those who experience any form of discrimination prohibited under the equal status acts (age, gender, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, disability, religion and membership of the Traveller community)*
- *migrants to Ireland including displaced people and international protection applicants*
- *Black Irish and people of colour born in Ireland (a growing proportion of the younger demographics)*
- *people from ethnic minority backgrounds within migrant communities*
- *those who experience socio- economic or ‘class based’ discrimination*
- *trans gender people*
- *those members of our communities who are re-integrating from prison*
- *those who are experiencing or recovering from substance abuse and other forms of addiction’*

Suggestion to reword Objective 1: To put in place a reliable and improved universal access Public Transport System to provide inclusive connectivity across the County and reduce private car dependency and transport-related emissions in tandem.

Objective 3 We suggest that this is broken up into two sentences with a full stop after ‘national living wage’ and the next sentence reading as follows:

These supports must be available to and appropriate for disabled people, women and girls including those providing care or involved in care work, members of the Traveller community, new communities, young people and those older members of our population who wish to continue working.

Under Objective 5 change to

‘To provide health and wellbeing actions including well – resourced, locally available mental health supports which reflect the needs of our whole community including targeted supports for young people.’

We believe that three additional objectives are necessary under this goal relating to housing and access to services we suggest firstly:

Objective 7: That Clare County Council as the key social housing agency in the county would use all available schemes and funds to buy and renovate houses and increase the public housing stock. In particular the opportunities provided by the new

Tenant in Situ scheme, and the Traveller Specific Funding Stream should be used to the full to prevent homelessness and to increase the stock of publicly owned housing/accommodation in Clare. That Clare County Council will ensure that secure long term appropriate homes are available in the county to families, single people, older renters, people with disabilities and those currently experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

Objective 8: That Clare County Council will seek to use all available measures and funds to reduce the high levels of vacant housing in County Clare, where nearly one in five houses are vacant.

Objective 9 Lastly that ‘The implementation plan for this LECF will seek to localise services including health, education, amenity and administration in the communities where they are needed.’

GOAL 2 – Life-long Learning & Training

We request that under Goal 2 the following new objectives are added:

- 7. Literacy: That education and service providers in the county recognise and address the levels of illiteracy, low literacy, financial illiteracy and digital illiteracy and put in place measures to counteract exclusion caused by the above.*
- 8. Language: That organisations working in education in Clare develop plans to include those for whom English is not a first language. This may mean making courses available in other languages as well as the provision of English learning opportunities.*
- 9. Establish a mentor and support scheme for those undertaking apprenticeships from communities which have high levels of long term underemployment. Ensure that employers who take on apprentices are supported and mandated to host the entire apprenticeship of each individual rather than profiting from their labour in the early years when pay levels are lowest.*
- 10. Support, enhance and continue to expand the use, availability and resources of public libraries which are an invaluable asset to Clare communities.*
- 11. Will ensure that educational opportunities are available in local areas of the county or where this is not possible that transport and childcare needs are met locally for prospective students.*
- 12. People are equipped with the right skills to be able to meaningfully contribute to and benefit from a zero emissions society*

GOAL 3 – A County with Vibrant Retail, Industry, Agriculture, Marine, Tourism & Culture Sectors

We request that in the explanatory text under goal three that the words ‘sustainable livelihoods’ should replace employment.

Under Objective 1. We see a need to acknowledge carbon emission reductions – so suggest the objective begins as follows: *‘Whilst working to reduce Carbon Emissions 51 % by 2030 and achieving the sectoral emission reduction targets Clare will have...’*

Re-word Objective 2: *Support agriculture and marine workers in Clare to play an active role in protecting and restoring the natural environment by providing avenues for sustainable diversification and viable income generation alternatives within those sectors.*

Under Objective 3: We suggest a change in the order of the text and the addition of communities- we don’t just want tourism to benefit local business but also to be accepted and beneficial to local communities residing in the area. *‘Improve the tourism industry’s engagement and integration of local businesses and ensure host communities benefit economically, socially and culturally from tourism taking place in their locality and that tourism recreation facilities are made accessible to young people living in Clare .’*

Under objective 4: *‘To support viable and vibrant town and village centres which provide the services and transport access points needed by their communities and rural hinterlands.’*

GOAL 4 – Enhance Economic, Cultural & Social Opportunity

Typo only – under objective 3 it should be ‘enhance’ not ‘enhances’.

We suggest rewriting Objective 3 as follows : ‘To facilitate and support plural ownership of the economy and a people centred approach to economic development through community wealth building which enhances the economic opportunities of all its residents.’

Under objective 5 add *‘whilst ensuring that traditional methods and processes are continued until such a time as communities with low digital literacy or access are not excluded’* (i.e cash, letters, phone calls, off line forms for services etc)

Under objective 6 add at the beginning *‘Recognising the current shortage of available housing in Clare alongside its’ growing population to provide the maximum level of high-quality housing/accommodation, ensuring the development, purchase or renovation of a range of house and accommodation types, sizes and tenures to accommodate...’*

Under objective 7 – the use of ‘maximise’ here is possibly unfortunate – we’d be better off to be using *‘To enable the sustainable stewardship of our Atlantic Coastline and the Shannon estuary, making considered use of its economic, social and recreational potential for the benefit of our communities whilst protecting the marine and coastal environment and managing the challenges of climate change and renewable energy developments’*

We request that under goal four the following new objectives are also added:

8. Expand and develop Clare’s public transport system to reduce private car dependency and improve public transport accessibility in order to support equal access to economic, social and cultural opportunities across Clare.
9. Support the development of a well-paid care economy that affords everyone in Clare the opportunity to participate in the transition to a greener, fairer and safer future.

GOAL 5 – Sustainable & resilient County

Suggestion to reword Objective 4 as follows: *To encourage and support community participation in and ownership over the development of our renewable natural resources, ensuring protection of climate the environment, with the intention of, building support for a Just Transition, assisting Ireland to achieve our carbon emission targets and enhancing the economic benefits to our local communities without causing damage to habitats.*

Addition of a new objective:

5. To ensure that measures to reduce and eliminate carbon emissions are fair and that the impact of climate action on our communities does not cause poverty, deepen or exacerbate existing inequalities or result in cultural damage. Community members experiencing socio-economic exclusion and discrimination across Clare are already disproportionately affected policies relating to energy poverty, food poverty and transport deprivation. Clare will put in place a just transition plan which will plot out the necessary changes, who must make them, their impacts, and propose remedies or replacements for income, location, heating, transport, and social life as necessary.

GOAL 6 – Diverse Innovative County

We would like to see ‘*employment opportunities*’ in the explanatory text under goal six replaced with ‘*sustainable livelihoods*’.

Under objective 2- **we would not** like to see enhanced digitalisation of public services at the expense of existing ones.

Objective 2 replacement: *There is an urgent need to see public services re-localised and offered face to face in local neighbourhoods, accessed by public transport with convenient stops and staffed to levels which would mean people of diverse backgrounds, ages, ability, language and literacy levels are guaranteed access to them. The agencies involved in this LECP will work to address the fact that services including social protection, community welfare, citizen’s information, health services, including mental health, educational and employment opportunities are not available to many people in the communities in which they live in Clare.*

We thank you for the collaboration to date during this process and welcome this opportunity to give further input.

Any questions in relation to this submission may be directed to Sarah Clancy, Clare PPN Coordinator on sarah@clareppn.ie / 086 3840973.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Clancy.