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Clare PPN submission to Clare County Council's Review of Rural Development Strategy 2026

September 16th 2022

Clare PPN welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the review of Clare County Council's Rural Development Strategy 2026.

Background:

Clare PPN's social inclusion college commenced work in April 2021 on a project funded by the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission to begin the process of developing a participative Anti- Poverty Strategy for Clare. This project was carried out in communities across Clare and worked directly with groups who experience poverty social exclusion and marginalisation. Their contributions and experiences were used to analyse policy as it relates to Clare by Dr Conor McCabe the project's lead researcher. The report from this project was published yesterday 15th September 2022 and so contains **the most up to date available statistics** on issues such as poverty, employment, population, health service provision and a range of other issues in County Clare as well as our recommendations for dealing with same.

We would greatly appreciate it if the report, attached here could **be considered in full** as part of the Rural Development Strategy 2026 review and we welcome any further opportunities to discuss its findings and recommendations. We held a briefing last night on the report for Councillors in Clare and several Councillors also requested that we submit the report in full as part of this process. (Cllrs Garrihy, Flynn, Killeen, C.Murphy)

Towards an Anti-Poverty Strategy for Clare - report in full linked here: [Clare_Anti_Poverty_Report_Sept2022_web.pdf \(clareppn.ie\)](#)

Clare PPN's environmental college also wished to make the following submission:

Clare PPN welcomes that "Particular effort will be put on embedding the strategic direction set out herewith in the ... Clare Climate Action Plan."

We recommend in section 2.3, that transport be added to the challenges that need to be addressed. The dominance of cars on rural roads can split communities in particular for children, people with reduced mobility and other people without private cars at their disposal due to the unsafe nature of our roads. As correctly identified in 2.4, this can lead to the movement of older people to more urban centred facilities with consequent loss of social fabric.

In section 2.4, we recommend adding opportunities in thermal upgrades of houses and renewable energy activities, as mentioned in 3.4.7.

We would like to support the statement in 3.4.5 that “As towns and villages are renewed people are less subject to isolation. They can walk to local public services such as libraries, entertainment, info hubs, shops and restaurants, community spaces.” We also recognise that even in towns, difficulty in safe walking/cycling/road crossing impedes active travel and the informal social contact that springs from that. We emphasise the opportunity there is for implementing such actions due to the active travel budget awarded to Clare County Council. We call on Clare County Council to consult the community widely on their active travel need and to seek the fullest possible allocation of funds to realise Clare dwellers ambitions around these projects.

We would like to support the proposal in 3.4.7. that “Innovative rural transport initiatives, such as ‘community car-pooling’, ‘befriending transport’ will be developed, as well as community bus initiatives to supplement the current rural provision.” The reasons for the low current usage of rural public transport should be identified and corrected. We suggest that this would be a priority aspect for personnel recruited to the active travel role within the council. We request that Clare County Council carries out a full audit of travel services and schedules within County Clare both public and private in order to determine their effectiveness as substitute transport systems to replace the use of private cars. This should be a gender, age, and disability proofed audit, which takes into account the varied needs for transport for care, work, supplies, schools and socialising. We request that Clare County Council base all actions on accurate current data.

We also support the proposal that “under the Climate Action Plan 2021 the Council will take actions to address the carbon reduction targets e.g., retrofitting, RES Development, etc., while regional skills for the green economy development are to be delivered within the context of the 2024 regional enterprise plan.” and consider that KPI’s should be developed to monitor and encourage these actions.

Yours Sincerely,
Mary O’Donoghue
On behalf of Clare PPN

Any queries in relation to this submission can be directed to Sarah Clancy, Clare PPN Coordinator, for the attention of the Secretariat of Clare PPN:

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