"Rural Development – A County Strategic Approach."

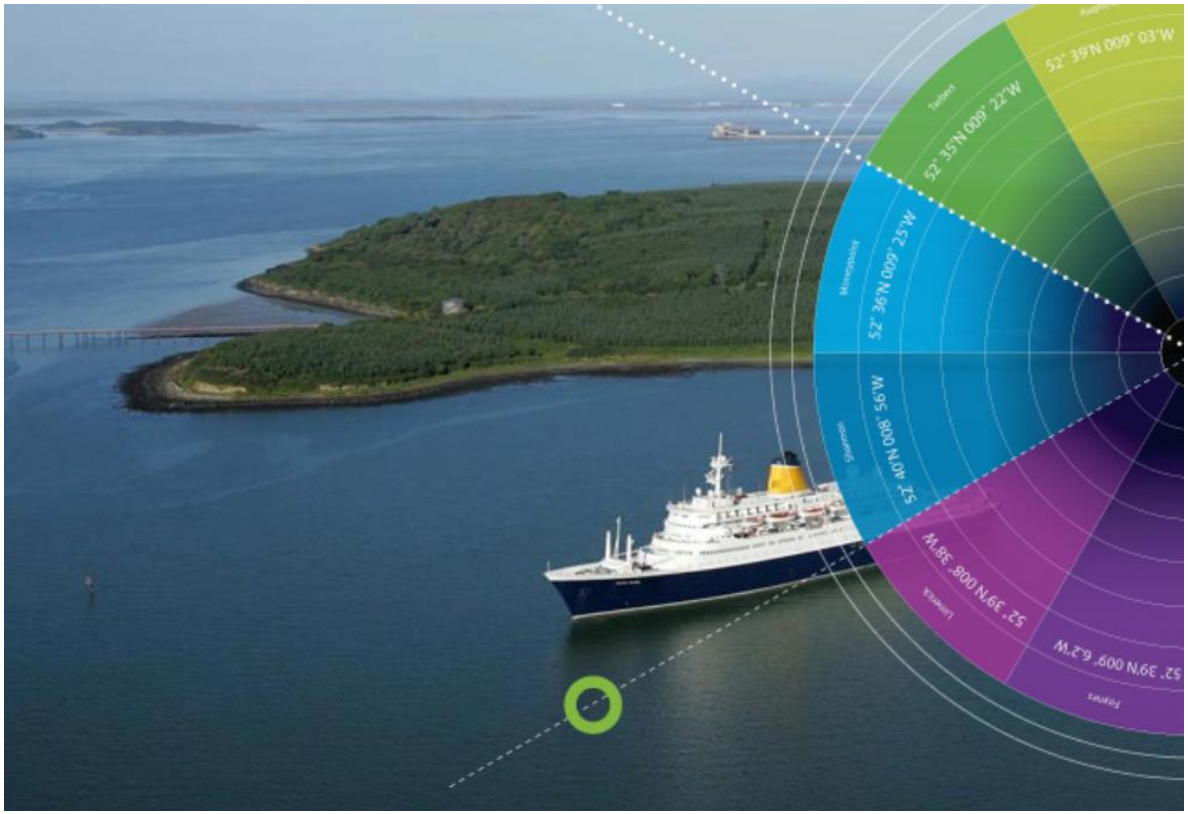
Leonard Cleary,
Director of Rural Development,
Clare County Council.

CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL

26th February 2019.

Rural Clare:
- searching for a team vision.

High level strategic view of Rural Clare.

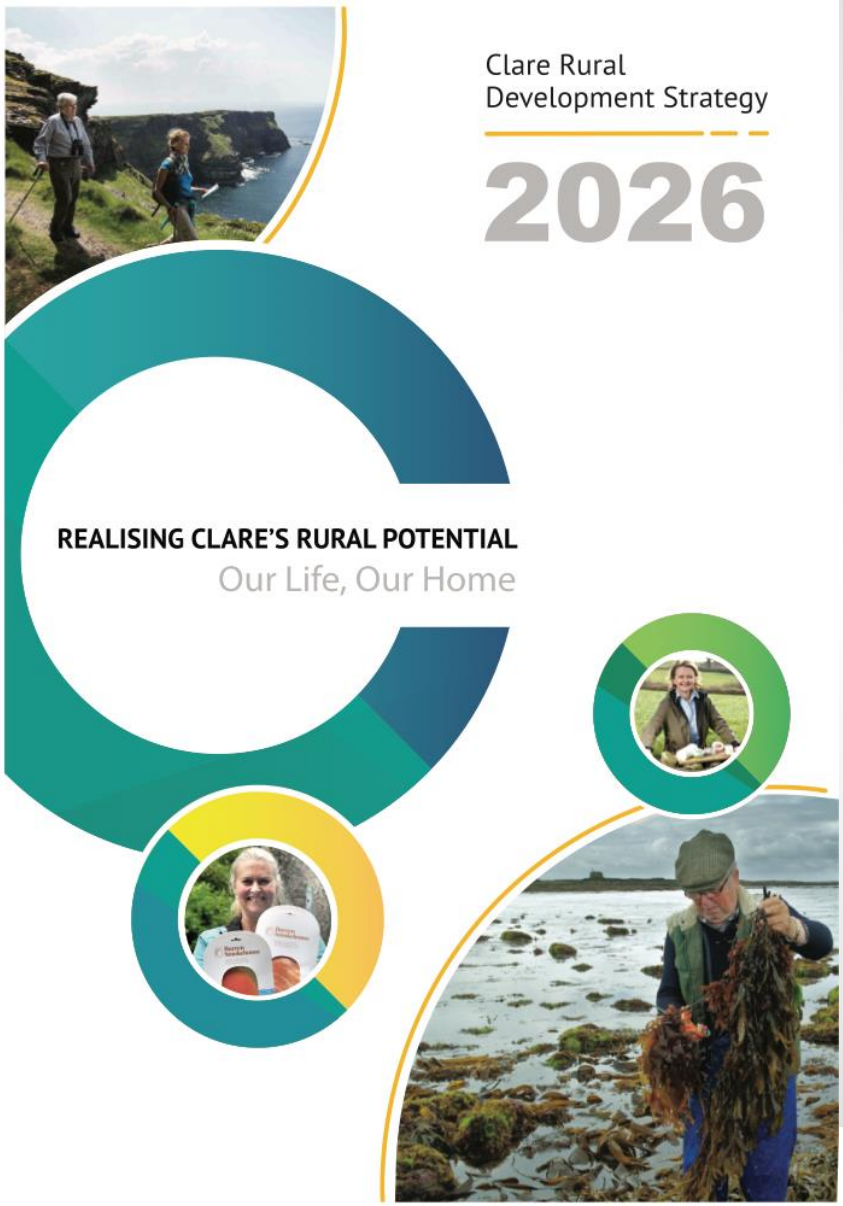


Re-orientate our current strategic direction as a Rural Development Forum.

Pat Dowling CEO of Clare County Council addresses the event with Minister Michael Ring Tom McNamara, Mayor of Clare –

Clare Rural Development Forum Launch of Rural Development Strategy:

September 2017



Launch of Clare Rural Development Strategy: September 2017

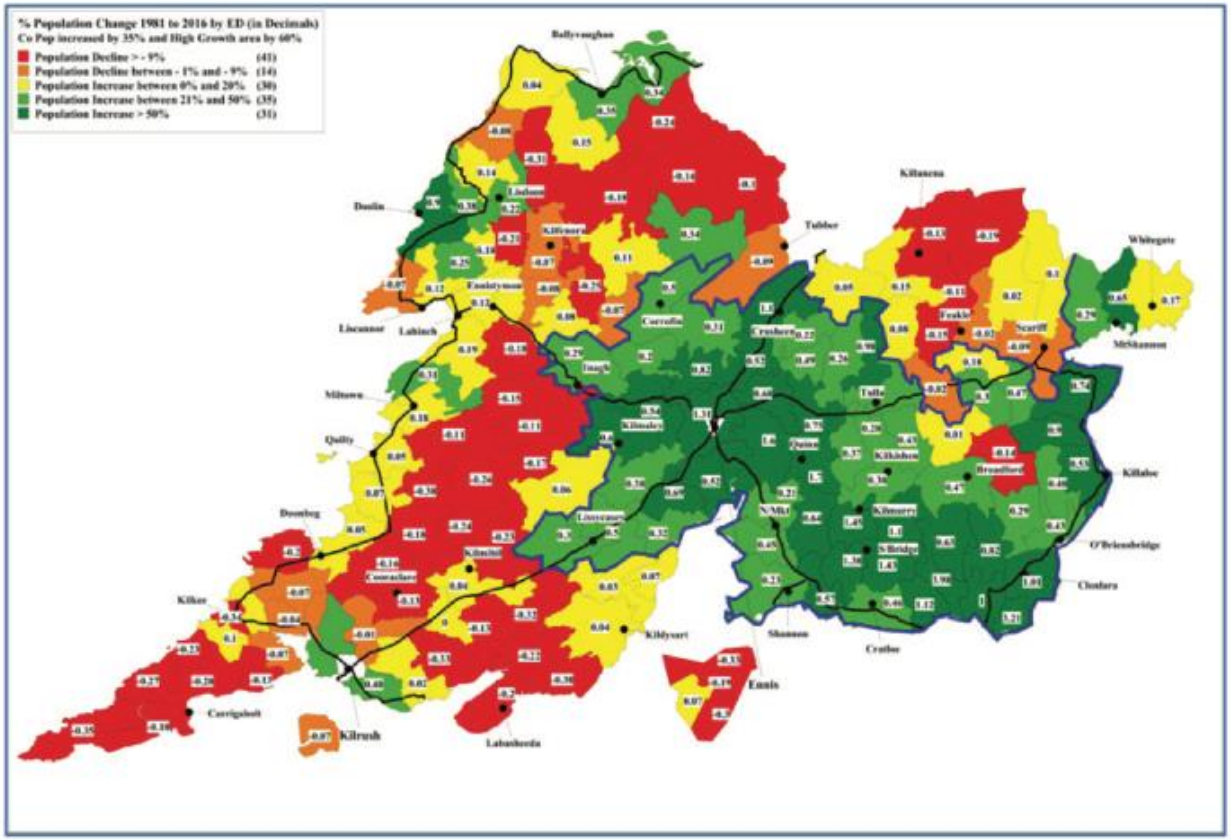
- Why a Rural Development Forum?
- Why have a County Strategy?
- What drove Clare to this?

Challenges in Clare?

Challenges in Clare?

- 1981-2016 Population growth of 61% in one part of county V's 3% decline in rural.

Map 1. Population Change in Clare 1981 – 2016 by ED



Source: Census Population 1981 and 2016 (Preliminary)

Challenges in Clare?

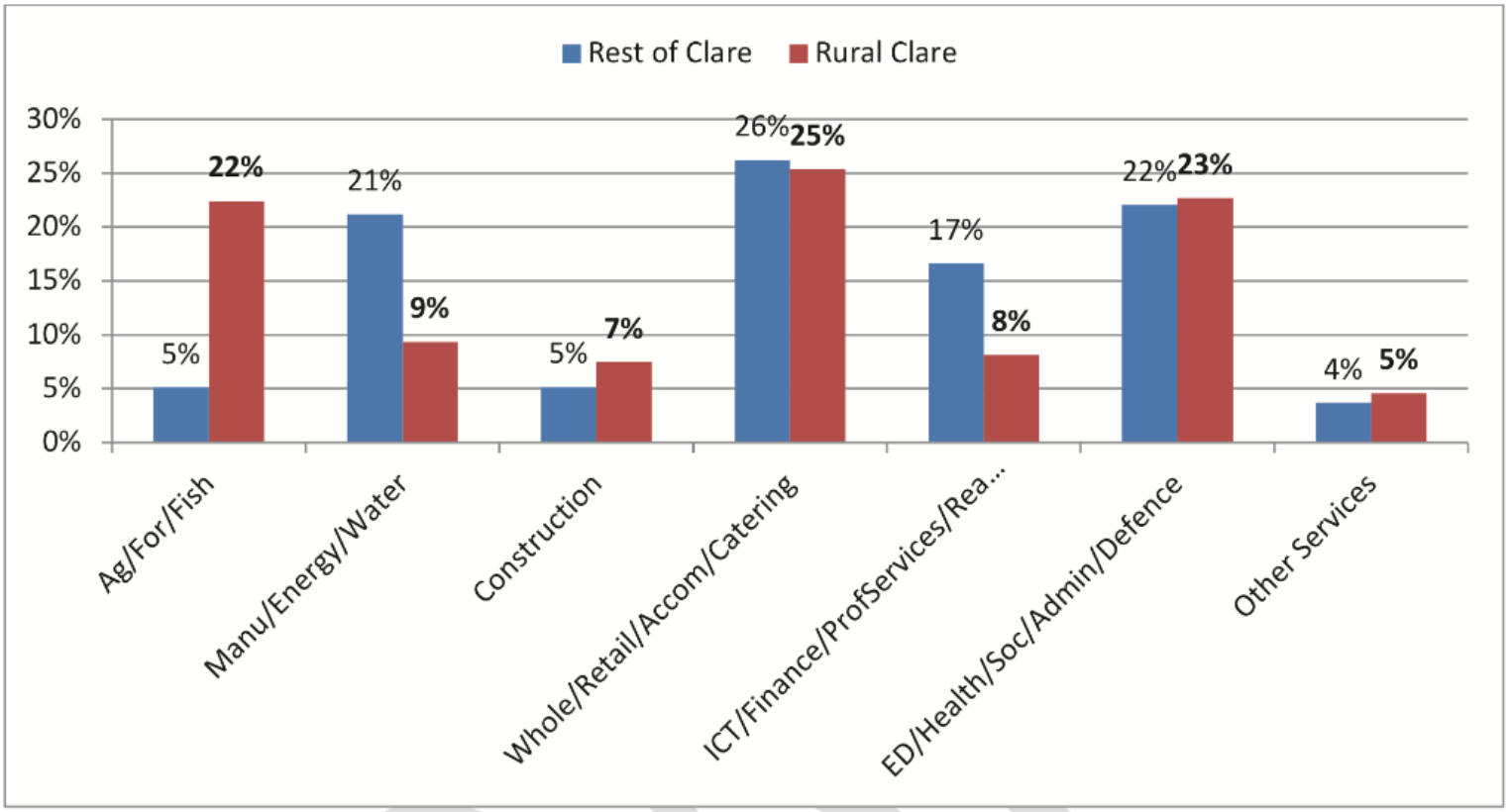
- Withdrawal of private investment in retail, manufacturing, ancillary services, agriculture.
- Contraction of public services: health /GPs, Garda, Post Offices, transport, enterprise development, welfare support services.

Challenges in Clare?

- Protracted wait for physical and service infrastructure: schools, broadband, water, public transport, broadband.
- Employment: lack of employment opportunities compatible with our educated younger generation and long commutes to work
- Attractiveness of rural living diminished.

- Lack of employment opportunities compatible with our educated younger generation and long commutes to work.

Diagram 2. Jobs in Rural Clare and rest of Clare



Source: CSO 'Travel to Work' 2011

Challenges in Clare?

- Flexibility of communities constrained.
- Maintaining costly community facilities that exceed needs.
- Steady decline in new family formations.

Challenges in Clare?

- These dynamics will lead to ...
  .... TERMINAL DECLINE unless reversed.

- → The case for a Rural Development approach.

- Sept. 2016 – first ever Rural Development Directorate established in Clare County Council.

- Jan. 2017 - National Context: Government Action Plan for Rural Development.

New Coordinates for Rural Change.

What is Rural Development?

Is it this?

What is Rural Development?

Rural Development is the process of improving the quality of life, social and economic well-being of people living in rural areas.

It is a distinct approach to interventions by the state in the social life and economies of underdeveloped counties. It is broader and more specific than 'agricultural development’

It is as much about engaging people in a <u>process</u> to support <u>projects</u> /services /community as it is to provide direct financial and physical interventions.

Strategy Actions

1. Social Enterprises
2. Multi-Service Centres
3. Co-operating Towns and Parishes
4. Broadband & Digital
5. Managing the Environment
6. Age Friendly
7. Rural Way of Life
8. Transport, Education & Water

Clare Rural
Development Strategy
2026

Importance of all actions:

Clare Rural
Development Strategy
2026

- Potential to create employment.
- Provide services locally.
- Incentive for people to locate to and visit rural areas.
- Improved value for money.
- Improved efficiency of service delivery

1. JOBS including Social Enterprises

4,000 JOBS IN RURAL AREAS OVER 10 YEARS

Employment is key to the future of rural areas.

Over the next ten years, 4,000 jobs will be created. Communities will develop social enterprises to provide essential local services, tourism information and enterprise supports.

The achievement of these employment targets will be supported by Enterprise Ireland, the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), the Office of the Action Plan for Jobs (APJ) and the LEADER Programme.

A special 'rural and community support unit' in Clare County Council will assist in this development.

A supportive entrepreneurial environment will be fostered by the development of local Hi-speed Broadband Hubs throughout the county.

Our social enterprise employs skilled staff and delivers high quality care, social support and training services to elderly local people in the community. It is managed by a local voluntary board of directors.

Mary Ita Griffin
Kilmaley Day Centre

2. Community Run Multi-Service Centres

Example:
West Clare Resource Centre, Miltown Malbay

COMMUNITY-RUN MULTI-SERVICE CENTRES

A full range of public services is key to ensuring people continue to live in and are attracted to rural areas.

By offering a range of public services from a single building, the public will be facilitated and service providers' overheads reduced. This will minimise the risk of closures and/or contraction. Health services, including GP services, Postal services, Social Protection services, Advice/Information services (e.g. Teagasc), Transport services, Garda services could all be provided in such centres.

The community will provide the premises, administration and management of such centres. The scale of these facilities will depend on the scale of their respective catchments.

Our multi-service centre replaced the vacant Vocational School and provides the services of a Dental Clinic, Child health room, Community Welfare Office, Public Library, Youthreach, Adult Education Centre, Elderly Care Unit, Childcare and an e-Learning Centre.

Cora O'Grady
Miltown Malbay Resource Centre

What do Multi-Service Centres Provide

A range of public services will be offered from a central location

- Enterprise hubs - Employment and Enterprise Supports
- Advisory & information services (e.g. Tourism, Farming)
- Family support services
- Transport services
- Health screening services
- Education and training services

3. Co-operating Towns and Parishes

TOWNS WORKING TOGETHER AND PARISHES PARTNERING EACH OTHER

Co-operating Towns and Partnering Parishes will drive the re-vitalisation of Rural Clare.

In order to ensure that public investment represents value for money and that private investment achieves an attractive return, neighbouring towns will combine and neighbouring parishes will partner each other to achieve greater scale. Combining towns will work with their satellite villages to achieve a sufficiently large population that will justify a hierarchy of investment. In the more open countryside, parishes will work together to combine their complementary assets and develop products of quality and scale that can be marketed nationally and internationally.

These types of co-operative endeavour are already visible in church 'parish clusters' and GAA 'amalgamations'. The combining towns and partnering parishes will be assisted by a specially developed 'Rural and Community Support Unit' within Clare County Council.

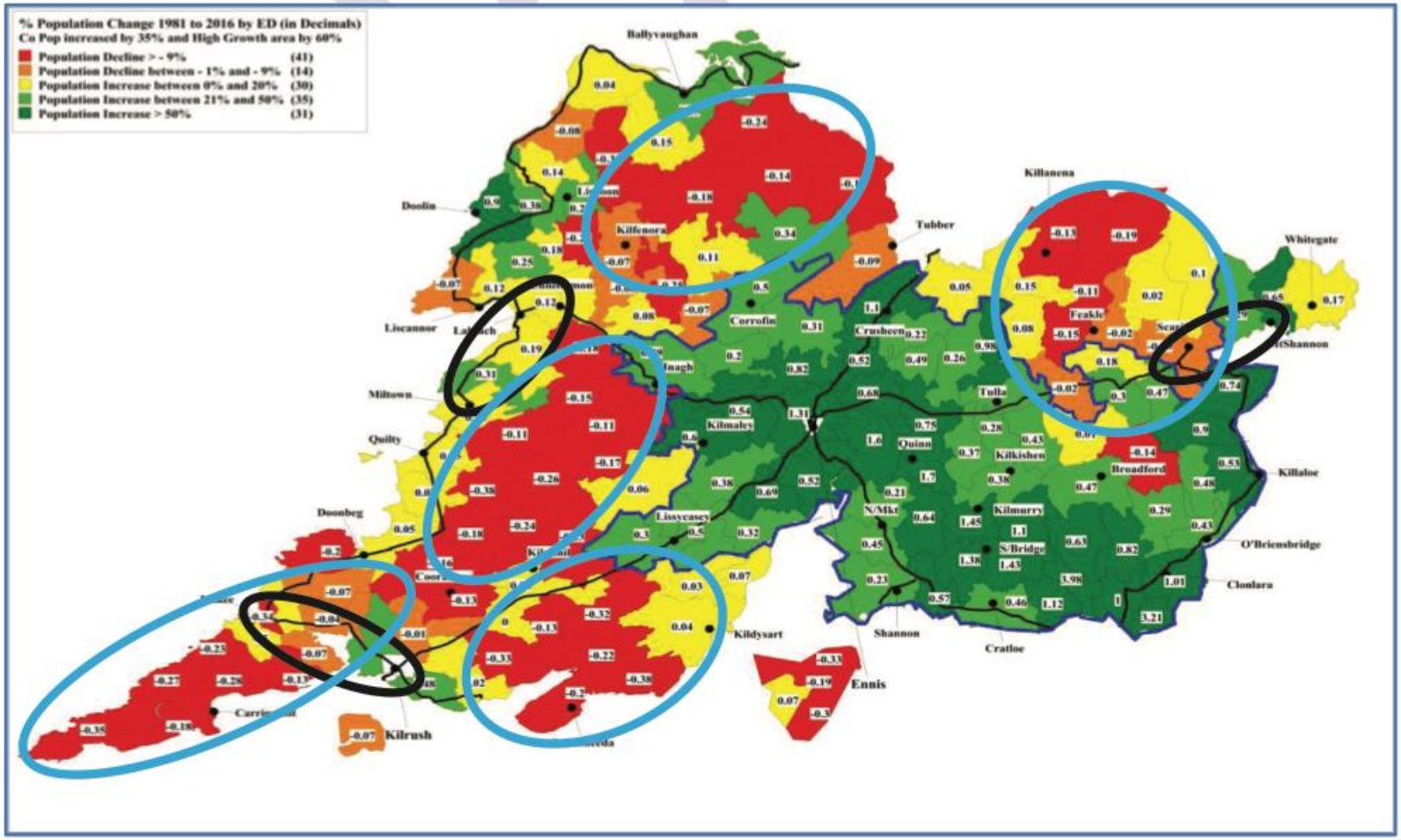
I encounter GAA clubs whose backs are often to the wall before they address the problem of declining player numbers. However, there are also many positive examples of clubs that have been reinvigorated through amalgamation – a lesson in how towns and parishes can co-operate now in order to thrive later.

Marty Morrissey
Broadcaster and native of Kilmurry Ibrickane

Our Diocese has commenced a re-structuring involving 'clusters of parishes' to address falling rural populations and declining numbers of priests. Our Pastoral Plan, Builders of Hope, seeks to rejuvenate local parishes with new models of participation and leadership of faith communities.

Bishop Fintan Monahan
Diocese of Killaloe

Co-operating Towns and Parishes



Note: Rings on the Map are indicative of a strategic approach and do not denote specific boundaries

4. Broadband and Digital

BROADBAND AND DIGITAL

The 'Clare Digital Strategy' is an integral support of rural enterprise, rural life and global communication.

By building 'Intelligent Communities' local people, enterprises and entrepreneurs are assured of access to high speed broadband in their own community. A number of dedicated 'digital hubs' will be established throughout the county. Hot desks will provide high speed broadband access that will facilitate E-working, small-scale training and conferencing.

The Clare Digital Strategy will ensure that communities have the skills and competencies to prosper in the broadband economy. It will ensure that entrepreneurs, visitors and local people, irrespective of their sector (agriculture, tourism, local services, international businesses, etc.) are able to use digital technologies.

Realising Clare's Digital Potential

Our Place, Our Home

Strategic Action Areas

1. Improving Access & Infrastructure

"Facilitating the rollout of "fit-for-purpose" High Speed Broadband Access for All"

2. Intelligent Communities

"Building intelligent connected communities in rural Clare"

4. Digital Council

"Leading by example"

3. Digital Enterprise & Employment

"Enhancing the Digital Maturity of Clare Enterprises and Workforce"

Digital Hubs in Kilrush, Miltown, Feakle, Ennistymon, Ennis

Kilrush Hub

5. Managing the Environment

MANAGING THE ENVIRONMENT

Our environment is our very life – the air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, the energy we use and the tranquillity we desire.

It is our cultural inspiration, the reflection of our heritage - a home that we share with many other diverse life forms. The health of our environment impacts on our health. Our way of life impacts on our environment. This is a mutually nurturing, but fragile, interaction. What we have inherited we must bequeath to the next generations. The consideration and management of our environment is at the heart of all the actions proposed in our Action Plan. This Strategy will draw on various environmental and conservation programmes (e.g. Green Ways, LEADER, Agri-Environmental Schemes, LIFE, etc) to achieve enhanced quality standards.

Our Burren Programme will invest up to €3m of public funding annually in rewarding farmers for their active care of this outstanding landscape. The programme will also bring jobs, increase business for local suppliers and underpin a sustainable tourism industry, but most importantly will help maintain the valuable social fabric of north Clare and contribute to the wellbeing of these people and their place

Dr. Brendan Dunford
Burrenbeo

6. Age Friendly Communities

AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Ageing is living in delightful anticipation, practical solidarity and comfortable acceptance.

As our social context changes more and more quickly, there is an urgent need to consider all generations and all ages when planning. Regardless of age, people need the assurance of safety and security at home as well as hospitality and welcome in their community.

Never was it more apt to say that 'what is good for one is good for all'. This strategy fosters intergenerational relationships by creating opportunities for all to participate in the social, cultural and political life of the community, thus facilitating people to live a life that they have reason to desire.

Our inter-generational project involved research on the timings of pedestrian crossings related to the needs of youth, families and elderly. We learned so much more about the need to plan our public and private spaces, facilities and amenities together.

Stella O'Gorman
Clare Older People's Council

7. Celebrating the Rural Way of Life

CELEBRATING THE RURAL WAY OF LIFE

Some people are born into and grow to cherish the rural way of life. Others are drawn to it.

The rural way of life is given expression in various creative and artistic activities such as drama, music, song, dance, film, literature, sculpture, art, sport and recreation. It is a rich tapestry of the informal and formal, embracing personal solitude, social exchange and community celebration.

Young people are introduced to the rural way of life at home, in school and in the community. As they get older they enjoy this way of life as an integral part of their daily life. Our strategy supports the various celebrations of rural living by fostering the cultural and artistic life of rural communities.

Our music is inspired by our unique landscape and cultural heritage and draws on our rural way of life. I, like so many other artists, am blessed to live here.

Blackie O'Connell
Musician and native of The Burren

8. Infrastructure - Transport, Education and Water

TRANSPORT, EDUCATION AND WATER

Modern life, both rural and urban, requires publicly funded infrastructure for Housing, Transport, Education and Water.

Rural housing, both private and public, will be extended to facilitate the stabilisation and growth of the rural population. Innovative rural transport initiatives, such as a type of 'rural Uber', 'community car pooling', 'befriending transport' and further community bus initiatives will be developed to supplement the current rural provision.

In conjunction with education, training and learning providers, additional opportunities will be developed that have greater local reach and relevance. The strategy will support the roll out of major and small Water Services infrastructure.

Communities need to start thinking about delivering services in a different way. For instance, a community based lift-sharing service could be developed using a 'Rural Uber-type' phone app. People who want 'a lift to town' could connect with those who are 'going to town anyway'. Or communities could invest in localised electric mini-bus services for residents and visitors alike.

Cillian Murphy
Loop Head Tourism

Clare Rural Development Forum
- new coordinates.

Clare Rural Development Forum
- playing as a team to win.