



Date: 16th April 2021

Re: Strategic Planning Project on the Development of North Clare

A Chara,

I am writing on behalf of both Lisdoonvarna Fáilte CLG and Clare Local Development Company to inform you of a significant joint planning initiative that has recently been launched in a compatible catchment of North Clare communities. The catchment for the project comprises the communities served by Mary Immaculate Secondary School and the Stella Maris Day Centre in Lisdoonvarna, communities such as New Quay, Ballyvaughan, Fanore, Carron, Doolin, Lisdoonvarna, Kilfenora and Kilshanny. This excludes other communities also identified as part of North Clare, communities that are more aligned to the service town of Ennistymon and the county town of Ennis.

The purpose of the planning initiative is to create a community-led and community-based roadmap for the strategic regeneration, development and sustainability of the region. The region has witnessed significant change in recent years which, among others, have included:

- dramatic changes to patterns of land usage and employment throughout the second half of the 20th Century;
- the increased centralisation of public services and employment opportunities, leading to substantial migration from North Clare communities and forcing individuals and families to consider how they adapt to the challenges of 21st Century living in a rural community;
- increased decline and dilapidation of their villages and towns;
- increased levels of social isolation and marginalisation, especially among those that are not village- or town-based
- increased reliance on car ownership in an era of inadequate rural, public transport;
- the growth in the global market and the parallel growth of tourism in the area which, however, remains a seasonal endeavour;
- growing recognition of the value and potential of remote working, and increased reliance on digital communication coupled with ongoing digital exclusion, especially in areas poorly served by broadband;
- growing recognition of the attractiveness of the west of Ireland and the consequent relocation of individuals and families from other parts of Ireland and the world to North Clare, leading to communities that are increasingly diverse in their population and in their outlook.

Change brings with it opportunities and threats and many of the North Clare communities have, with the support of the Clare LEADER Programme 2014-2020, proactively sought to respond to local opportunities and threats by developing respective local community development plans. A notable feature of those plans was that most of the communities identified similar priorities within their respective localities. In other words, the issues that affect one community in North Clare are likely to affect others and a collaborative, regional approach to addressing opportunities and threats is therefore necessary.

In seeking to create a roadmap for the strategic regeneration, development and sustainability of the North Clare region, it is planned that the strategic planning project will:

- explore the existing assets and unique selling points of each community in North Clare, and the potential of the town of Lisdoonvarna with its large community owned asset base to act as a hub in the development of North Clare;
- develop a multi-year community-led and community-based strategy that will maximize the growth potential and sustainability of North Clare, particularly in terms of greater investment, business growth and increased population;
- facilitate solutions to cross-community deficits and concerns identified through Phase I Community Development Planning projects across North Clare.

The project was formally initiated in late March. A planning group of leaders from across the communities of North Clare has been convened to lead the planning process, working alongside Clare Local Development Company and Lisdoonvarna Fáilte. The planning group is working with a social researcher whose role involves supporting the group to make informed choices about the future development and sustainability of North Clare. The group is also chaired by Professor Chris Curtin, acting as an independent chairperson to the process. Chris, a native of North Clare, is an academic who has researched, written and taught on rural and community development for many years, and is well placed to add value to this development project.

The planning process will in due course wish to engage with you, once some initial groundwork has been done on the development of the strategy. We look forward to your input and to working with you to progress the strategic issues that will be prioritised in the emerging strategic plan.

If you would like any further information on the initiative, contact:

Joe Garrihy, Lisdoonvarna Fáilte (086 8219624)

Darina Greene, Clare Local Development Company (087 9582451)

Yours sincerely



