



**Clare County Council  
Economic  
Development Strategy  
2011-2014**

Comhairle Contae an Chláir

Clare County Council

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## **1. Overview**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This Strategy is being prepared in the midst of a global recession. Recovery from recession is a complex process involving many global agents and factors beyond the reach of Clare County Council. Nonetheless, little if any meaningful economic development can happen without the involvement of the local authority. Our input to and role in this recovery process is serious. To meet this challenge we must use imagination and common sense coupled with the tools of public and private finance, politics, planning, micro and macro economics, and all resources at our disposal. Underpinning our role is a need to focus on activities which generate a surplus to the county's communities, particularly in this period of worryingly high unemployment across the County.

It is valuable that the County Development Plan 2011-2017 has been adopted and it provides the framework for this Economic Development Strategy. This document presents a rationale for an Economic Development Strategy and presents a brief background context for the development of the Strategy. It does not provide detail on the economic performance of Clare, planning and development guidelines and challenges and opportunities as these are covered at length in other national, regional and local plans and strategies.

Within the reality of limited financial resources, this Strategy includes a practical work plan of actions which can be implemented by Clare County Council to improve the environment for economic development in Clare so that the county can avoid further erosion of its economy, employment and competitiveness and position itself to take advantage of an economic upturn in the future.

### **1.1 Why does Clare County Council need an Economic Development Strategy?**

Clare Local Authorities Corporate Plan 2010-2015 sets out the Vision for the county as:

*A County where people want to sustainably live, work and visit because of its unique quality of life. An inclusive County of sustainable communities that have respect for their environment, a sense of awareness of place, a sense of shared purpose and a sense of civic pride.*

One of the core objectives of this Corporate Plan is:

*Maximising Economic Development in the County.*

This Strategy seeks to contribute to the realisation of that Vision by specifically addressing the achievement of the above core objective relating to economic development.

Unemployment and job insecurity are hugely damaging to well-being and the evidence on this is particularly clear cut. The need for a dedicated Economic Development Strategy is set against the backdrop of a declining local economy arising from a global economic downturn, increased unemployment, greater pressure on resources, increased expectations from service users and greater global competition for Foreign Direct Investment. It also sets up Clare County Council for performance and commitment to the restructuring of local government in Ireland.

## **1.2 Economic Development - definition**

Economic Development is concerned with improving the well-being of a society by achieving sustainable prosperity with opportunity for all. It achieves sustainable increases in living standards, increased per capita income, better education and health as well as environmental protection. It encompasses activities that include attracting inward investment, promoting the county, facilitating the growth and relocation of existing business, providing the opportunities which meet the needs of new indigenous and international business and encouraging the growth of a range of industry sectors.

## **1.3 Purpose of this Strategy**

The primary purpose of this Strategy is to improve, develop and enhance the contribution and role of Clare County Council for economic development in County Clare by improving delivery of its existing services, making greater and smarter use of its resources and adopting responsive, flexible and forward-looking policies to ensure balanced economic development which will deliver multi-sectoral and spatially-balanced economic activity in the county.

*The local authority is not responsible for creating jobs but it can facilitate the process for existing and new businesses to do so by ensuring that suitable economic development policies, initiatives and programmes are in place to assist business to achieve its goals.*

It is not intended to repeat or replace policies on enterprise and economic development contained in the County Development Plan, the Clare County Development Board strategies or the plans of other organisations. Rather, this Strategy attempts to confine itself to select achievable actions which will position the Local Authority as a facilitator of economic activity.

## **1.4 Methodology**

This Strategy and its action plan have been developed by adopting a three-strand approach with stakeholders and participants, i.e. those who will be implementing the Strategy and those who will be affected by it:

- Internal

All directorates in the Council were asked for input to this Strategy and the areas for action presented herein represent feedback from that process. An internal cross-directorate enterprise/economic development team comprising representatives from Community & Enterprise, Planning and Environment is already established which has informed the development of this Strategy. Internal actions in the Strategy will focus on improving our services and cross-departmental work.

- Elected Members

The Strategy has been developed in conjunction with the SPC and has taken on board the input of elected members who represent the interests of the county's communities on various sub-groups and committees. A number of the actions will require the involvement of elected members to be successful.

- External

Clare County Council is represented on the County Development Board Economic Development Sub-Committee – the Enterprise Partnership Forum – which is chaired by the county manager and is representative of all the key enterprise, economic development, education, training and employment organisations operating at county and regional level. It is intended that this Strategy will complement the inter-agency Clare Enterprise Strategy by both strategies combining to address the micro and macro elements of economic development.

In addition to the above, Clare County Council will continue to engage with community and business interests in the development of area-based and sectoral actions to enhance the attractiveness of towns and villages as better places to live, work and do business, improve necessary infrastructure and connectivity including water and treatment facilities, roads and parking, and broadband. Engagement will also feature in relation to business parks, vacant premises, promotion of the county, development of town centres and the levying of rates and charges.

## **2. Context & Strategic Framework**

### **2.0 Role of the Local Authority in Economic Development**

The local authority is emerging in Clare and nationally as a key driver in stimulating and enabling economic development. This role involves expansion of its traditional functions in the provision and maintenance of infrastructure, planning and development, environmental functions, and the levying of rates and charges. This is evidenced by the local authorities in Clare taking the lead in the development of initiatives such as the inter-agency Enterprise Partnership Forum, development of third-level links and the development of key assets in the county and region including the Shannon Estuary, Shannon Airport and Renewable Energy.

The ability of the local authority to pull together all the different services and influences of various organisations to ensure relevance to the county as a whole cannot be overstated. This brokerage model with other agencies and public and private interests can deliver economic renewal for Clare.

### **2.1 Global, National, Regional and Local policy context**

This Strategy is developed within the context of legislation governing the role of local government and the following current documents:

- Clare Local Authorities Corporate Plan
- Clare County Development Plan
- County Clare Enterprise Strategy
- Mid West Area Strategic Plan (MWASP)
- National Spatial Strategy
- National Development Plan
- Programme for Government 2011
- Mid West Regional Planning Guidelines
- Retail Strategy for the Mid-West Region

The Strategy has also taken account of recommendations in the most recent government reports, policy documents and strategies for revitalising the economy. It also takes account of recommendations to local government for enhancing its role in economic development, improving efficiencies and changing priorities for local government.

## **2.2 Success Factors**

A number of key success factors have been identified in numerous reports and studies on the key criteria for successful economic development and include:

- *Skilled workforce*
- *Innovation in firms and organisations (including public sector)*
- *Economic diversity of the Industrial Base*
- *Connectivity*
- *Quality of life*
- *Availability and cost of business land and premises*
- *Strategic capacity to mobilise and implement long term development strategies*

The Action Plan of this Strategy in addition to other local authority strategies and inter-agency local and regional strategies addresses these factors.

## **2.3 Regional Perspective**

Although this is an organisation and county specific strategy, it must be acknowledged that meaningful job creation requires economic development of scale, which often results from clusters of businesses and critical population mass. In the case of Clare, this can be achieved through a regional approach to economic development. Clare County Council has already shown its understanding of the need to engage in regional approaches through its engagement with other local authorities, agencies and third level institutes in the region and in the inter-agency approach to the development of one of the region's greatest assets - the Shannon Estuary.

## **2.4 Spatial Considerations**

In order to achieve sustainable prosperity for all, it is important that economic development activity takes place in appropriate locations. This will ensure maximum economic benefit is derived, local communities are enhanced and the environment sustained. Development should take place where possible where there is already good infrastructure in place - water, services, roads, transport, telecommunications, housing - to enhance the development of clusters and to minimize additional strain on financial and natural resources and climate change issues; nonetheless this strategy recommends that area-based economic development initiatives be pursued to maintain the viability of rural

communities. The County Development Plan recognizes the role of rural enterprises in sustaining the local economy.

## **2.5 Infrastructural Challenges**

Robust and efficient transport, communications and utilities infrastructure along with reliable flood management systems are critical to the success of businesses in County Clare. Equally important are sustainable, quality homes and amenities in attractive communities where people want to live, work and visit.

The Council faces a challenge in delivering improvements in an era when public funds on infrastructure are falling. Difficult choices will have to be made with the resources at our disposal. It is not feasible for Clare County Council or indeed any public organisation in the current climate to provide for all the infrastructural improvements required by business and communities. In prioritising infrastructural improvements, we must engage with the private sector to ensure we make the right choices and to investigate public private partnership models.

## **2.6 Strategic Objectives**

The County Development Plan identifies the assets and resources of the County. County Clare has specific geographical advantages, natural resources and strategic assets which have, over the years, combined to make a significant contribution to the local, regional and national economies which include but are not confined to:

*Electricity Infrastructure*

*Wind, Ocean, Tidal and Biomass Renewable Energy Potential*

*Shannon International Airport*

*Shannon Estuary*

*Internationally renowned Business and Tourism Destination*

Despite these advantages, the County is failing to extract maximum benefit for its communities which are currently experiencing significant rates of joblessness.

In consideration of the particular challenges of the current economic environment and in examining the resources of the County, a number of key strategic objectives have been formulated with the aim of developing actions which will result in tangible improvements in economic development in the County. These objectives have been prioritised to deliver maximum economic development across the County.



- **Develop, Market and Protect the County's Assets and Resources**
- **Build Working Partnerships with Third Level Institutions**
- **Promote the County for Economic Development**
- **Create and Promote a Green Business County**
- **Develop the County's Towns and Villages**
- **Improve Information and Services to Business**

The Action Plan details the specific actions will deliver on these strategic objectives.

## **2.7 Guiding Principles**

The following principles underpin the development and implementation of this Strategy:

- **Adding Value** – the actions will add value to overall economic development activities in the County
- **Action Orientated** – the Strategy has a clear focus on achieving specific targets
- **Sustainability** – the actions are economically, environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable in the long term
- **Integrated** – that the actions of the strategy are co-ordinated within and between the relevant directorates and services of Clare County Council
- **Proactive, Creative and Innovative** – the Council will actively research, develop and promote the best policies and activities to foster and promote economic development within a changing economic climate
- **Flexible and Responsive** – this Strategy will respond and adapt to the changing economic circumstances over its lifetime
- **Effective use of Resources** – the implementation of the strategy will include the most effective use of all available resources
- **Collaboration** – this Strategy takes account of other organisations' areas of responsibility and actively pursues collaborative working relationships

## **2.8 Limitations of this Strategy**

There are other features of society that are strongly associated with well-being, features which are non-economic but which are significantly influenced by the design of the economy. These include participation in the community and volunteering, proximity and access to open green space, social trust and social interaction. Conversely, pollution and noise are negativity associated with well-being. These factors are not and cannot be dealt with in detail within the scope of this Strategy, however, taking account of these factors has influenced the local authority in its policies and strategies in recreation and sport, housing, environment and climate change, social inclusion and in its decisions in relation to the adoption of planning policy and in the granting of planning permissions.

*Note 1:* Specific consideration is given to ongoing council activities and plans to develop the economic potential of the renewable energy sector, the Shannon Estuary and Shannon Airport as key strategic assets of the county.

*Note 2:* Social Inclusion considerations of economic development such as unemployment and accessibility of opportunity are dealt with in the Council's Social Inclusion Strategy.

*Note 3:* Tourism is dealt with as a specific sector under the Council's Tourism Strategy.

*Note 4:* Ongoing Training and Skills Development is an important component of building and maintaining a strong and resilient enterprise base in the County. It is a specific objective of this Strategy to strengthen the links with the Third Level institutions, however specific programmes to address skills needs are dealt with under the work programmes of other organisations.

*Note 5:* Specific budgets are not attached to the actions in this Strategy as actions will be carried out within existing resource allocations and with levered funding where available.

## **3. Implementation & Monitoring**

### **3.0 Risk and Uncertainty**

In preparing this Economic Development Strategy, we are cognizant of the need to be sufficiently robust and flexible to respond to changing circumstances and demands. Actions may need to be reformulated as situations change, resources are allocated, and responsibilities of local authorities and other external organisations are transformed.

There are particular challenges and threats to the achievement of this Strategy which are changing on an almost daily basis be they financial, legislative, geographical or political. All these challenges will be taken into account in the implementation of this Strategy.

### **3.1 Implementation Structure**

#### **Role of the Cross-Directorate Committee on Enterprise & Economic Development**

The Clare County Council cross-directorate committee on enterprise and economic development chaired by the Director of C&E will monitor the implementation of the strategy. Relevant lead sections will be responsible for progressing and implementing actions in a timely manner.

Achievement of this Strategy depends on the buy-in of management, staff, elected members, business and communities. All directorates in Clare Council, along with the Town Councils and area offices will be responsible for implementing their actions and reporting on progress to the implementation and monitoring committee.

The Director of C&E will report quarterly to the SPC.

#### **Role of Elected Members**

Clare County Council considers the involvement of elected members to be invaluable in the economic renewal of the county and in implementing the actions in this strategy. Elected members are particularly important with regard to representing the views of local communities, garnering local involvement in initiatives, and in putting forward proposals for high-value appropriate projects for their areas.

### **Role of Economic Development Unit**

The Economic Development Unit (EDU) of Clare County Council, currently located within the C&E Directorate, works directly with the Planning and Environment directorates to facilitate indigenous and overseas business developers. The EDU has been offering support, information and advice to businesses in the county for some time; however the focus of the unit now on economic development initiatives has been strengthened in line with direction from the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government to the local authorities. The inter-agency nature of the EDU's activities continues to provide key input into the development of employment, enterprise and education opportunities in Clare as well as combining efforts and resources with partners to attract inward investment.

The EDU will be responsible for the day-to-day co-ordination of this Strategy and in conjunction with the cross-directorate committee will report on ongoing implementation and monitoring as well as highlighting opportunities and pursuing initiatives for further economic development.

## **4. Action Plan**

### **4.0 Suitability of Actions**

The Action Plan presented here is intended to be a dynamic, responsive and flexible work plan. It allows for – as it must – current actions to be revised and new actions added, based on changing circumstances, opportunities, resources and national policy.

The Action Plan contains a mix of high level actions which seek to investigate, develop and deliver significant economic development of scale. Many of these activities can be instigated by the Council and then further developed in an inter-agency capacity. There are also several smaller scale actions aimed at improving how the Council engages with business users and at enhancing our towns and villages to make them more attractive to investment and economic activity. The small-scale actions reflect necessary improvements identified by various Council directorates, area offices, elected members and the business community. They combine to create an environment conducive to enterprise activity and economic development in the county.

### **4.1 Strategic Initiatives**

Clare County Council is involved on an ongoing basis in a number of activities which promote economic development at county and regional level. Priorities identified and policies proposed in the County Development Plan and regional strategies have informed this Action Plan and will be continue to be progressed. The Council will input, lobby and progress initiatives which can enhance economic activity including the development Shannon Airport, Shannon Estuary, and the development of Renewable Energy.

### **4.2 Internal and External Collaboration**

Clare County Council will deliver on inter-agency actions and initiatives which impact on economic development through the various County Development Board Strategies addressing Enterprise, Energy & Climate Change, Tourism, Recreation & Sport, Social Inclusion and Rural Development.

Ongoing facilitation of economic development throughout the council's departments will continue. The existing enterprise/economic development team will ensure a co-ordinated and timely cross-departmental response to progressing development proposals.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
<b>Develop, Protect and Market the County's Assets and Resources</b>	<b>1. Shannon Estuary:</b> (a) Undertake a Strategic Integrated Framework Plan (SIFP)  (b) On completion of SIFP - prepare a promotional Plan for the Shannon Estuary	2012/2013	Planning with other directorates and external consultants	LCC, LCityC, KCC, SFPC, DoEHLG, SD	Agreed inter-agency statutory SIFP to form variation to County/City Development Plans for environmentally sustainable development outlining multiple uses of the Estuary  Comprehensive integrated marketing and promotional strategy
	<b>2. Strategic Development Sites:</b> Identify key locations and sites with owners Development of master plans. <b>Shannon:</b> Prepare a high level plan for key opportunity sites at Shannon Airport, Shannon Free Zone and Westpark on completion of the Shannon Local area Plan	2012-2013	Planning	SD, Shannon Airport, Westpark, external agencies	Identified sites for marketing for potential development opportunities
	<b>3. Renewable Energy:</b> (a) Prepare a County Renewable Energy Strategy for incorporation into the County Development Plan (b) On completion of Strategy, promote the development of RE projects in County	2012  2012 onwards	Planning	LCEA, EDU, external agencies, private sector	Comprehensive integrated framework for the development of the Renewable Energy sector in Clare  Renewable Energy projects of scale Enhanced job creation opportunities

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Develop, Protect and Market the County's Assets and Resources	<b>4. Council Land Banks and Buildings:</b> (a) Generate income for council through leasing/ sale of land banks and unused buildings (b) Protect council property. Fully integrated cross-directorate inventory and subsequent fencing (c) Conduct full register of County's piers and harbours investigating Council title/ ownership/ access/ condition	Ongoing	Corporate Services, Planning, Infrastructure, Chief Technician	Housing and other departments	Income generation Reduce claims of adverse possession Respond to economic realities Promote for economic/ tourism development
	<b>5. Public Rights of Way:</b> Conduct county wide Public Right of way Register	2013	Planning		Protection of areas of special interest
	<b>6. Serviced Land:</b> (a) Conduct availability studies (b) Produce ready-to-plot location maps of all fully serviced industrial sites	2011 onwards	Planning Chief Technician	Staff resources to be allocated	Updated inventory available to all departments Facilitate fasttracking of investment proposals Ready information for potential investors

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Develop, Protect and Market the County's Assets and Resources	<b>7. Area-based economic working groups:</b> Establish for specific purpose and time period to propose and progress area-based projects and initiatives to promote economic activity.	2011 onwards	Area offices/ Elected members	EDU/Planning /Communities and external organisations	Spatially-balanced development of economic activity  Greater community involvement  Diversification of economic activity
	<b>8. Conduct studies of selected settlements:</b> To identify development sites, of opportunities and deficiencies.	2012/2013	Planning with C&E		Economic potential of smaller settlements identified
	<b>9. Broadband and Electricity Infrastructure:</b> (a) Provide telecoms and electricity infrastructure information to business. (b) Continue to lobby for greater roll-out. (c) For permissions for new larger scale economic developments, request provision of improved broadband infrastructure	Ongoing	IT with Shannon Broadband	ESB, Telecoms providers	Enhanced business broadband  Spatially balanced enterprise development  Improve rural economy and home-based business



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<b>Develop, Protect and Market the County's Assets and Resources</b>	<b>10. Valuing &amp; Developing Human Resources:</b> Pursue, promote and implement Job Placement Programmes	Ongoing	Human Resources	FAS, Third Level Institutions and external organisations	Provision of work experience to unemployed and third level students and graduates.  Completion of necessary improvement works and services.  Improved resources for council
<b>Build Working Partnerships with Third Level Institutions</b>	<b>1. Ennis Innovation Centre:</b> Build on existing initiative to expand Innovation and Technology Transfer services in County	Ongoing	EDU	NUIG, UL, SD, ETC, external organisations, private sector	Increased strategic partnerships with 3 <sup>rd</sup> level sector  Increased no. of HPSU business in County  Increased job opportunities
	<b>2. Increase 3<sup>rd</sup> Level Research Activity in County:</b> Pursue opportunities to exploit natural resources of County for economic development through high level research activity and industry collaboration	2011 onwards	EDU	Third level, WDC, Private Sector, LCEA	Feasibility Studies to investigate sector specific opportunities for County, e.g. Seaweed Biorefining, Mariculture, Creative Industries, etc.  Centre for Competence established in County

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
<b>Build Working Partnerships with Third Level Institutions</b>	<b>3. Third Level Provision:</b> Influence and advocate for accessible 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level education to meet the needs of jobseekers and business, through the Ennis Regional Learning Centre	Ongoing	EDU with ETC	LIT, MIC, UL, VEC, EI, CLDC, external organisations	Increased 3 <sup>rd</sup> Level provision in County  Increased skilled workforce in County  Improved job opportunities
<b>Promote the County for Economic Development</b>	<b>1. County Promotion Strategy:</b> Investigate, influence and develop where appropriate location branding and promotion efforts - work proactively with the promotion bodies and local authorities to come together on strategic initiatives  Actively use Council's publications and resources to promote the County - Connect with Clare, Summary County Development Plan and Summary Economic Development Strategy	Ongoing	Corporate Services, Town Council, Elected Members	All departments, elected members, business and community links. Link with Tourism Promotion agencies	Enhanced and more focused promotion of County abroad for economic development of scale

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
<b>Promote the County for Economic Development</b>	<b>2. Gateway and Hub Promotion:</b> Increase promotion of Shannon Gateway and Ennis Hub status and assets and resources through development of specific events and activities.	Ongoing	Ennis and Shannon Town councils	Chambers, external organisations	Professional and co-ordinated showcasing of county regionally, nationally and internationally
	<b>3. County Ambassadors:</b> Investigate use of Clare Diaspora as Ambassadors for development Investigate and follow up appropriate contacts and funding opportunities	2011 ongoing	Corporate Services, Elected Members	All departments, elected members, business and community links	High profile contacts to promote interests of County to wider international audience
	<b>4. International events and festivals:</b> Work to increase economic activity and international reputation of county by developing and attracting world class events.	Ongoing	Town councils/ C&E/ Elected members	CTF, SD, with external organisations	Increased revenue and international exposure

<b>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME FRAME</b>	<b>LEAD</b>	<b>PARTNER</b>	<b>OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR</b>
<b>Promote the County for Economic Development</b>	<p><b>5. Increase Promotion of Clare as Creative County:</b>                      (a) Investigate and pursue the potential of Creative Industries Sector in Clare                      To include promotion of the county as film location</p> <p>(b) Establish network of support for artists</p>	2011 onwards	Arts Officer, EDU, Tourism Officer	WDC, NUIG, Glor, SD, CEB, Arts Council, WDC	<p>Increased no. of creative businesses and activities in Clare</p> <p>Further development of creative sector and attractiveness of county</p> <p>Creative capital of county enhanced</p> <p>Use of vacant premises</p>
	<p><b>6. Local Promotion Activities:</b>                      (a) Promote services, schemes and information to business through increased media publicity</p> <p>(b) Organise Economic Development Conference to showcase opportunities</p>	<p>From 2012</p> <p>2012</p>	<p>EDU, all departments</p> <p>EDU with Planning</p>	<p>Clare FM, external agencies</p> <p>External organisations</p>	<p>Regular Slot on Clare FM promoting council services to business, combining with input from all enterprise/ economic development agencies in County</p> <p>Focused attention on opportunities and challenges for development in County                      Specialist expertise on specific sectors</p>
	<p><b>7. Award Business Excellence:</b>                      Promote business involvement in and promotion of excellence awards</p>	Ongoing	Town Councils, EDU	Chambers/ business and enterprise agencies	Greater profile for performing businesses to encourage and attract business development

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Create & Promote a Green County	<b>1. Green business development zone:</b> Develop and promote green energy/carbon neutral zone in county to attract international business. Work with stakeholders to identify sites, energy providers and potential investors	2011 onwards	EDU/ LCEA/ Planning	SEAI, Shannon Development, Town Council, Chamber, Shannon Airport, Private Sector, 3 <sup>rd</sup> level institutions	Internationally attractive green development zone  Combined Heat & Power Plant with Biofuels Research Centre  District Heating Network for Shannon  Clean-tech industries established
	<b>2. Sustainable Transport:</b> Provide Charging points for Electric Vehicles in consultation with ESB E-Cars	2011 onwards	Town Councils	ESB E-Cars, LCEA	Charging Points for Electric Vehicles in Urban Centres  Decreased reliance on fossil fuels.  Promotion of Green County to residents and tourists
	<b>3. Green Business Initiatives:</b> Organise annual events to encourage business and communities to reduce, reuse and recycle thereby reducing costs of doing business and combating climate change	Annually	Environ. Awareness Officer	LCEA, EDU	Increased environmentally sustainable business practices in County: Reduced waste, energy and water consumption  Decreased costs to business  Promotion of Green Business County

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
<b>Create &amp; Promote a Green County</b>	<b>4. Renewable Energy Week:</b> Develop an annual Energy Week to highlight and showcase the opportunities for renewables and cleantech sector development in County	2012 onwards	LCEA	Environment, Planning, EDU, Town Councils, Area Offices	Increased awareness of opportunities for development
<b>Develop the County's Town &amp; Villages</b>	<b>1. Improvement of Business Premises:</b> (a) Work with owners/occupiers to develop management companies for maintenance and advertising of business/industrial parks and identify future development needs  (b) Examine potential use of vacant premises for non-commercial and community use	Ongoing	Town Councils	Business representatives	Improved business facilities: infrastructure, signage and promotion  Improved occupancy  Increased business
	<b>2. Town Centre Retail Schemes</b> Investigate and pilot appropriate schemes for improving retail activity in town centres	Ongoing	Town Councils, Elected members	Chambers/ Business representatives	Greater occupancy levels in retail spaces
	<b>3. Integrated community/town websites:</b> Develop professional, user-friendly websites	Ongoing	IT	Communities/ Chambers	More coordinated and professional promotion of county

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
Develop the County's Town & Villages	<b>4. Improvement of Town Centres:</b> <i>(a) Parking and Pedestrianisation:</i> Work with Chambers, etc. to identify needs in bus, taxi, car parking and pedestrianisation, traffic calming and park and ride facilities <i>(b) Signage:</i> Develop Signage Plans for towns and villages <i>(c) Loading Bays:</i> Examine needs in county towns	Ongoing	Town councils, area offices, Planning	Chambers, Business representatives Business/ Communities	Towns and villages more attractive to business  Highlighting of specific features to market towns  Needs-based provision Improved access
	<b>5. Outdoor market development/casual trading:</b> Encourage local economic activity through provision of covered markets and trading opportunities	Ongoing	Casual trading, area offices	Local communities	Increased local trading and economic activity.
	<b>6. Community Allotments:</b> Encourage use of leftover land in estates by communities for allotments	2011 onwards	Housing	Communities/ Residents' Associations	Improved appearance of estates. Community Pride  Skills Development

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Develop the County's Town & Villages	<b>7. Environmental &amp; Design Initiatives:</b> Promote business and community involvement in local environmental initiatives and re-initiation of Design and Conservation awards Scheme	2011 onwards	Planning/ Environment / Housing	Business/Com munities	Enhanced pride of place. Improved appearance of towns and villages
Improve Information and Services to Business	<b>1. Review Rates &amp; Charges:</b> Review Business rates, charges and levies in consultation with business community	Annually	CCC/Town Councils	Business Sector	Transparent Charging Mechanism for business  Rates and charges are linked to economic cost of development and service provision
	<b>2. Improve web-based services to business:</b> (a) Improve the content and quality of information on council services.  (b) Improve the content, quality and visibility of information on the Business pages of website  (c) Enhance use of Clare Business Directory	Ongoing	IT with all departments  EDU with IT		Improved quality and timeliness of information Improved accessibility to and out-of-hours access to services Wider promotion of local authority  Awareness-raising of services and opportunities, schemes.  Promote and communicate with local businesses



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE	ACTION	TIME FRAME	LEAD	PARTNER	OUTCOME/ PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
<p><b>Improve Information and Services to Business</b></p>	<p><b>3. Improve Billing and Charging Functions:</b>                      (a) Improve Water billing and collection function                      (b) Advance more electronic bill-pay methods for business                      (c) Water-metering programme: Charge on basis of consumption</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2011 onwards</p>	<p>Finance</p>		<p>Direct contact between council and business customer</p> <p>Improved accessibility and user-friendly service</p> <p>Reduced pressure on resources</p> <p>More accurate and fair charges across businesses.</p>

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## **Glossary of Abbreviations**

- C&E** - Community & Enterprise Directorate of Clare County Council
- CCC** - Clare County Council
- CTF** - Clare Tourism Forum
- CDB** - Clare County Development Board
- CEB** - Clare County Enterprise Board
- CLDC** - Clare Local Development Company
- EDU** - Economic Development Unit of Clare County Council
- EI** - Enterprise Ireland
- ETC** - Ennis Town Council
- HPSU** - High potential start-up businesses
- LCEA** - Limerick Clare Energy Agency
- LIT** - Limerick Institute of Technology
- MIC** - Mary Immaculate College
- NUIG** - National University of Ireland, Galway
- SD** - Shannon Development
- SPC** - Strategic Policy Committee for Community, Enterprise, Tourism & Emergency Services
- UL** - University of Limerick
- VEC** - Clare Vocational Education Committee
- WDC** - Western Development Commission



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