

2015

STRATEGIC  
ENVIRONMENTAL  
ASSESSMENT  
SCREENING REPORT OF  
THE COUNTY CLARE  
LOCAL ECONOMIC AND  
COMUNITY PLAN HIGH  
LEVEL GOALS,  
OBJECTIVES AND  
ACTIONS

Prepared for Clare County Council December 2015

# CONTENTS

1 County Clare Local Economic and Community Plan- High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions. ....	2
1.1 Introduction .....	2
1.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment .....	3
Figure A: Planning Hierarchy .....	4
1.3 Background to LECP .....	4
1.4 Summary of High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions.....	4
1.5 Environmental Considerations .....	5
2 Schedule 2a Screening Assessment .....	10
2.1 Introduction .....	10
Table 2a SEA Screening.....	10
2.2 Conclusion to SEA Screening Assessment.....	14
Annex A: Detailed commentary.....	16
A.1 Introduction.....	16
Table A: SEA Commentary and consistency with Clare County Development Plan 2011-17 as varied.....	18
Theme: Economic Development, Employment and Enterprise.....	18
Theme: Quality of Life, Health and Wellbeing.....	20
Theme: Education & Training .....	22
Theme: Research and Development .....	23
Theme: Climate Change and Energy .....	24

# 1 COUNTY CLARE LOCAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY PLAN- HIGH LEVEL GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

The European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive (2001/42/EC) requires an environmental assessment be carried out for all plans that are prepared for certain specified sectors, including land use planning of which the proposed Clare Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP) relates. The preparation of High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions represent the third phase in the preparation the LECP, a new plan required under the Local Government Reform Act 2014. The LECP is to be made by local authorities over a six year period and consists of two elements – economic and community. The purpose of the LECP is to set out the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and local and community development of the local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders. The LECP is not intended to be a detailed operational programme.

There will be four phases to the preparation of the Plan, these are presented below in Table 1 and show how the SEA will relate to the plan preparation.

**TABLE 1 STAGES IN LECP AND SEA**

<b>Local Economic Community Development Plan Process</b>	<b>SEA / Environmental Inputs</b>
<b>Stage 1: Preparation</b>	
a) Establish & analyse the socio-economic evidence base b) Review of relevant high level strategies and plans. c) Develop a socio-economic statement for Co Clare and develop high level goals for the integrated LECP d) Advisory steering group to prepare, and to adopt the statement for public consultation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screening of the SEA Goals and Objectives (undertaken in June 2015)</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 2: Public Consultation</b>	
a) Undertake a public consultation on the socio-economic statement & high-level goals b) Revise the statement and refer to the Municipal Districts (MD) & Regional Assembly (RA).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review consultation feedback from specified environmental authorities.</li> <li>SEA consideration of consultation feedback</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3: Develop the Objectives &amp; Actions (Current Stage)</b>	
a) Develop detailed objectives for the plan underpinned by clear, measurable actions b) Advisory steering group to prepare, agree to the objectives & actions c) Advisory steering Group to submit a final draft incorporating the statement & goals, objectives & actions for consideration by MDs and RAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Screening of the Detailed Objectives for the Plan taking into consideration any amendments as a result of consultation feedback.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4: Finalise Plan</b>	
a) Consider & adopt final draft (revised as necessary following consideration by the MDs and RAs). b) Local Authority to adopt the final draft of the LECP c) Final Plan submitted to the Minister & published by LA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Finalise determination to establish if SEA or AA required.</li> <li>SEA Determination</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 5: Monitoring &amp; Review</b>	
a) Advisory Steering Group to monitor progress on actions & against measurable targets for the objectives.	

## 1.2 STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations, 2004 (as amended) state that SEA is mandatory for certain plans while screening for SEA is required for other plans that fall below the specified thresholds. The purpose of this screening report is to determine whether the making and implementation of the High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions will or will not, lead to significant environmental effects for the Plan area and if it will require a full Strategic Environment Assessment. Local Government Guidance on LECP (2015) states *“it is the responsibility of the local authority preparing the LECP to take account of the SEA directive and Article 6 of the Habitats Directives and ensure compliance as appropriate.”*

The following Regulations transpose this Directive into Irish law:

- The European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004),
- The Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004) and further amended by
- S.I. No. 200 of 2011 (European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011) and S.I. No. 201 of 2011 (Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) (Amendment) Regulations 2011).

In deciding whether a particular plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, regard must be had to the criteria set out in Annex II of the SEA Directive. The approach to this screening assessment is to identify and state where the High level goals, objectives and actions correspond to existing Clare County Development Plan Policies and/or Objectives and thereafter to assess the remaining high level goals, objectives and actions for potential environmental effects.

Please note the draft Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023 is currently on public display and, once adopted, will underpin the LECP for the remaining lifetime of same. Section 1.5 of this SEA Screening Report, Environmental Considerations has been updated where relevant to reflect the up to date environmental baseline information contained in the SEA ER that accompanies the Draft CDP 2017-2023.

Section Three of this report assesses these against the criteria contained in Schedule 2a of the Regulations; Annex A presents a more detailed commentary on each high level goal, objective and action. Figure A below illustrates where the high level goals, objectives and actions which form part of this LECP preparation sits within the planning hierarchy. Each of these land use strategies have been subject to the SEA process.

FIGURE A: PLANNING HIERARCHY



### 1.3 BACKGROUND TO LECP

The Local Government Reform Act 2014 makes legal provision for the reforms set out in the *Government's Action Programme for Effective Local Government, Putting People First*, (October 2012). The Act provides the framework for a more joined-up approach to local and community development programming, which will seek to draw together key local partners to oversee the provision of more effective, efficient and sustainable services for citizens and communities.

Delivery of the strategy and actions "on the ground" will be the role of the relevant public bodies and agencies including the local authority itself, the Local Enterprise Office (LEO), and other relevant national and local bodies including the Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board, TUSLA the Child and Family Agency, the HSE, the Intreo Offices of the Department of Social Protection, as well as non-public agencies including the local development companies, voluntary organisations and community-based organisations across the county.

A key principle underpinning the LECP is sustainability and as stated above, the LECP is required to be consistent with the existing Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and the Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSEs), to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies, and a new National Planning Framework, to replace the current National Spatial Strategy. With regards to land-use planning the LECP must be consistent with the existing statutory Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 as varied and "*not present alternate or competing proposals that would lead to inconsistency*".

### 1.4 SUMMARY OF HIGH LEVEL GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS.

Informed by the socio-economic profile of County Clare (prepared and subject to SEA Screening in June 2015) and consultation on same, the LECP is now at its third stage of preparation. This stages provides greater detail on the LECP by underpinning the goals with more detailed objectives and actions –these in turn will inform the delivery of the LECP over its lifetime.

There are five thematic areas and a series of high level goals accompanied by actions. These themes are as follows:

- Economic Development, employment and enterprise;
- Quality of life, health and well being;
- Education and training;
- Research and development, and
- Climate Change and energy.

## 1.5 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

The SEA Environmental Report of the draft Clare County Development Plan 2017-2023, provides the following descriptions of the environmental resources around the County. This has been used as it provides up to date environmental information on the County.

The Plan area is rich in biodiversity, containing many important, and protected, habitats and species such as the Shannon Estuary, lakes, turloughs, fens, wetlands, woodlands, bats, wildfowl (duck and geese), waders, salmon, lamprey and otters. However, it also contains many other habitats which are not protected such as scrub, parks, streams, hedgerows, tree lines, roadside verges, housing estate open spaces and gardens. It is these locally important habitats and species within the landscape, including extensive areas of wetland, fens, broadleaf woodlands, grasslands and turloughs, which provide links between the more rare and protected habitats, and are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild plants and animals such as garden birds (robins, wrens, finches, etc.) and migrant summer visitors (swallows, cuckoos, warblers, etc), otters, hedgehogs, bats, pigmy shrew and other Irish mammals, lamprey, salmon and other fish species, and a variety of invertebrates, including beetles, bees, butterflies, dragonflies and damselflies. In total, Clare has 37 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 10 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 14 Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs) and 61 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs) (Note; some of these pNHA are also SACs and SPAs).

The Socio-Economic Statement prepared as part of stage one of the LECP preparation (2015) presented more up to date research in terms of population ; however fundamentally basic challenges include restoring young working population to pre-recession levels. . Additionally, the increasing trend of elderly age cohorts and their needs must also be catered for. Human health data for the County is not easily available. However, population health and quality of life are very much influenced by the presence and state of the other environmental parameters.

The western area of County Clare consists of Namurian sandstone and shale which are sedimentary rocks. Marine shelf facies stretches from the north of Clare, through the centre of the county, down to the southern centre of the county and also into the east – the last glaciation event carved into these deposits which now form the limestone pavements making up the Burren landscape. The south of Clare also contains three small areas of Waulsortian mudbank deposits. The east of the county consists of three corridors and four small areas of Waulsortian mudbank. In addition, there are two patches of marine shelf facies, two corridors and six patches of Courceyan limestone, two large and two small areas of Upper Devonian to Lower Carboniferous Old Red Sandstone, five areas of Silurian sandstone/greywacke/ shale, two small areas of Mid to Upper Ordovician acid volcanics,

two small areas of marine shelf facies, two small areas of Mid to Upper Ordovician slate, one small area of Carboniferous volcanics and minor intrusions and three corridors and three small areas of lower limestone shale. There are 89 sites of geological importance within County Clare, which include cave systems, limestone pavements and mushroom stones. The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) has identified some of these areas as Geological Heritage Sites as part of their Irish Geological Heritage Programme.

County Clare has a significant number of rivers, lakes and turloughs. The main rivers within and surrounding the County are the River Shannon and River Fergus. The Shannon and Fergus estuaries together form the country's largest estuarine complex. Both rivers have a significant number of tributaries. Lough Derg in the east of the County is the largest lake on the River Shannon.

The Water Framework Directive water body status of the surface and groundwater bodies within County Clare and published by the EPA in 2015 identified 50% of river water bodies in the County as being of 'high or good' status, 30% classified as between moderate to bad status with the remaining 20% unassigned. This contrasts with the lakes of the county, of which 25.7% were classified as high or good status, 30.9% moderate to bad status and 42.8% unassigned. Groundwater is defined as the water stored underground in formations of saturated rock, sand, gravel, and soil. Groundwater reserves are a valuable source of water supply at present but particularly for future domestic use, industry and agriculture uses and it also performs an important role in sustaining the base flows in the County especially the River Shannon, River Fergus and their tributaries.

Flooding is a major issue in relation to County Clare, particularly over recent years and the issues of flood risk management; through mitigation and adaptation measures and developing overall resilience to climate change are of critical importance. A strategic approach to the management of flood risk is important in County Clare as the risks are varied and disparate, with scales of risk and scales of existing and proposed development varying greatly across the county.

Air quality monitoring in Ireland is undertaken largely to implement EC Directives on smoke and sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>), lead, ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) and nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and to assess compliance with National air quality standards. Ireland is divided into four zones for the purpose of monitoring. Ennis is in Zone C, with the remainder of the County in Zone D. The air quality in the Rural West Region and County Clare is "good".

The greatest energy consumers and producers of CO<sub>2</sub> in County Clare are the energy production and transport sectors. Whilst Ireland generally does not have a significant outdoor air quality problem the biggest threat is emissions from road traffic. The majority of the plan area is rural in nature where travel is an essential part of daily life. Agriculture is changing, and so too are the consequences for the National herd, directly related to methane production. Land use changes will have far-reaching implications for climate change that could include sweeping changes to commuter patterns with the building of more one-off houses in rural areas and the resultant increase in GHGs, SO<sub>2</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, VOC and other pollutant emissions.

Due to the position of County Clare on the western seaboard with an International Airport, deep water estuary, railway and high quality motorway, National, Regional and local road networks, the County has a significant strategic transportation infrastructure within the Mid-West Region(now the

*Southern and Eastern Regional Assembly*). Limerick/Shannon is designated as a Gateway under the National Spatial Strategy. Shannon International Airport is a critical element in the National transport infrastructure. The designation of Ennis as a Hub town has brought forward improvements in transport infrastructure, e.g. the Ennis bypass Bus services in the County are mainly limited to long distance routes between Cork, Limerick and Galway from Ennis, with a local bus service between Ennis and Shannon Airport. Local Services are also provided for by Clare Bus, a not-for-profit bus service, which has a large number of routes that connect Ennis with its extensive rural hinterland. The transport of goods and passengers is well established between Clare and the Aran Islands and Clare and Kerry. The County also has harbour resources, most notably the deep sea port associated with Moneypoint.

Clare falls under the Southern Region Waste Management Plan area for which the management plan was published in May 2015. Within the County Development Plan Area there are a range of waste recycling facilities which include 5 recycling centres and transfer stations as follows; Central Waste Management Facility, Inagh Ennis Recycling Centre, Ennis Lisdeen Recycling Centre and transfer station, Kilkee Scarriff recycling centre and transfer station, Scarriff Shannon recycling centre. Domestic and commercial waste collection is undertaken solely by private permitted collectors, which include waste separation to aid waste recycling. There is an extensive education and awareness programme of waste prevention initiatives in order to minimise waste going to landfill.

The responsibility for the provision and management of water services (water supply and wastewater but excluding storm/surface water other than where sewage has been combined with surface water) was transferred to Irish Water on the first of January 2014. Irish Water is currently analysing water services infrastructure needs at a national level and identifying priority projects for inclusion in the next Capital Investment Plan (CIP 2017-2022). Priorities must include investment to ensure acceptable service levels to existing customers, achieving regulatory compliance.

In general, there is sufficient water supply treatment capacity in the county to meet the needs of the target population identified in the core strategies. Wastewater within the county is treated either through wastewater treatment plants (48%) or individual septic tank units (44%). Many of the buildings which are located outside of the larger towns and villages are not connected to the public wastewater disposal system, and the effluent must be treated by individual proprietary wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks. There are 31 urban wastewater treatment plants in County Clare.

The term 'renewable energy' refers to those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment including the sun, wind, oceans and the fall of water. Geothermal energy, plant material and combustible or digestible agricultural, domestic or industrial waste may also be regarded as renewable sources of energy. The Council recognises the importance of developing renewable energy sources in the interest of achieving a low carbon economy and security of energy supply. A Wind Energy Strategy and a Renewable Energy Strategy have been prepared for County Clare and comprise Volumes 5 and 6 of this plan respectively. The Wind Energy Strategy identifies the optimum locations for wind energy developments in the county having regard to environmental and geographical constraints and the protection of the amenities of local residents. A new Wind Energy Strategy will be prepared for County Clare during the lifetime of this plan. The Clare County Renewable Energy Strategy (RES) (Vol. 6 of the CDP 2017 – 2023) sets out the renewable energy resource targets for County Clare up to 2020. It outlines the potential for a range of renewable

resources, including Bioenergy (Biomass) and Anaerobic Digestion, Micro Renewables, Geothermal & Ground Source Heat Pump, Solar, Onshore Wind, Marine Renewables (Wave and Tidal Energy), Pumped Hydro Energy Storage and Micro Hydroelectric Power. It acknowledges the significant contribution such renewables can make to County Clare, becoming more energy secure and less reliant on traditional fossil fuels, thus enabling future energy export and meeting assigned targets

County Clare has a rich and varied archaeological record covering eight millennia. There are currently c.7500 monuments in Clare, which is more than most counties in Ireland. Notably, there is little evidence from the earliest period, the Mesolithic, but the Neolithic or New Stone Age and subsequent eras are well represented with many sites and artefacts demonstrating life in Clare for the past 6,000 years. Recent archaeological surveys of intertidal areas in the Shannon Estuary have uncovered a wealth of archaeological material including evidence of prehistoric settlement dating back to 7000BC. There are eight submerged forest locations, three of which represent relict woodland that has been inundated by rising water levels and which can date back far into prehistory

Architectural heritage refers to structures and buildings together with their settings and attendant grounds, fixtures and fittings, groups of structures and buildings, and sites, which are of architectural, historical, archaeological, artistic, cultural, scientific, social or technical interest. There are 857 protected structures in the Draft Plan area ranging from churches, bridges, grain stores, houses, shops and public buildings. Many structures of industrial and railway heritage are also included in the Record. The town centre which has survived almost intact since the late 16th century and other groups of buildings in the plan area are designated Architectural Conservation Areas, affording protection to the exterior of all structures within the ACAs in order to protect the unique architectural character of an organically evolved, mediaeval, Gaelic market town.

The National Landscape Strategy (NLS) for Ireland 2015-2025 seeks to provide a framework for the protection of the many cultural, social, economic and environmental values embedded in the landscape. The objective of the Strategy is to provide the data that will assist in the future decision making process regarding our landscapes, and which will ensure that decisions are made on the basis of factual evidence collected. The NLS will assist in the achievement of greater consistency in decision making across the country when dealing with issues of landscape, in particular via landscape character assessment. It will be used to ensure compliance with the European Landscape Convention and to establish principles for protecting and enhancing the landscape while positively managing its change. It will provide a high level policy framework to achieve balance between the protection, management and planning the landscape by way of supporting actions. As part of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 (as varied), Clare County Council in conjunction with CAAS Environmental Services revisited the policy approach, called "Clare's Living Landscapes". This approach builds on the "Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare"

The three Living Landscape types are:

Settled landscapes – where people live and work;

Working Landscapes – intensively settled and developed areas within Settled landscapes or areas with a unique natural resource – Western Corridor Working Landscape - The Shannon Estuary Working Landscape and,

Heritage Landscapes – where natural and cultural heritage are given priority but where development is not precluded rather things must happen more slowly and carefully.

## 2 SCHEDULE 2A SCREENING ASSESSMENT

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The following section and table below presents the SEA screening assessment of the High level goals, objectives and actions against the criteria provided in Schedule 2a of the Planning and Development (Strategic Environmental Assessment) Regulations 2001-2011 which details the criteria for determining whether a plan or programme is likely to have significant effects on the environment. More detailed commentary is provided in Annex A to this report.

The Screening assessment should be read in conjunction with the High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions as well as the Habitats Directive Screening report.

TABLE 2A SEA SCREENING

<b>Criteria for determining whether the proposed High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions (HLGOA) are likely to have significant effects on the environment</b>
<b>1. The characteristics of the HLGOA having regard, in particular, to:</b>
<b><i>the degree to which the HLGOA sets a framework for projects and other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources,</i></b>
<p>This represents the third stage in the preparation of the LECP and comprises goals which were previously screened for SEA. Whilst over the course of the consultation period, some additional goals have been identified or rephrased, these are also assessed as part of this screening report (see Annex A).</p> <p>Forming part of the LECP, the HLGOA are not intended to be a detailed operational programme but aim to complement existing frameworks and statutory plans and policies of which the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 as varied is of most relevance. The HLGOA statement does not set a framework for projects rather it supports the strategic aims and objectives of the CDP 2011-2017 and provides for greater engagement through community participation and social inclusion measures.</p> <p>Where support is given for potential landuse related activities for example <i>SCO 6: Increase the provision of infrastructure for environmental, social, transport and ICT needs</i>, no additional lands, projects or zonings are identified, and the goal itself is embedded in a number of objectives detailed in the Clare CDP 2011-2017 that was previously subjected to both SEA and HDA.</p> <p>In addition, through the application of both the SEA and HDA process to the Clare CDP 2011-2017 a significant number of protective and precautionary objectives have been included to ensure no significant effects on the environment. As the HLGOA will support the Clare CDP it too will be subject to these objectives and mitigation measures. These include CDP 17.18 Mitigation from Habitats Directive and Strategic Environmental Assessment and CDP 17.19 Natural Heritage and Infrastructure Schemes and</p> <p>Relevant objectives for this strategic objective <i>SCO6</i> include: CDP 11.1 Midwest Area Strategic Plan, CDP 11.2 Motorway, National Primary and Secondary Roads and CDP 11.9 Railway Network, CDP 11.15 Shannon Airport amongst others.</p> <p>The HLGOA will not set a framework for projects and other activities with regard to location, nature,</p>

size and operating conditions or by allocating resources. The Clare CDP 2011-2017 and other Local Development Plans set out clearly the spatial framework for development locations and landuse in the County and will be referenced as required and appropriate.

***the degree to which the HLGOA influences other plans, including those in a hierarchy,***

The HLGOA forms part of the LECP plan preparation; the LECP is a statutory requirement and will be the primary mechanism at local level to bring forward relevant action arising from measures under the Action Plan for Jobs and other statements of Government policy including the report of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA). The LECP is a bottom up participatory local level plan which must be consistent in the first instance with the Mid-West Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022 and subsequently the Regional Spatial Strategies (RSEs) to be prepared by the Regional Assemblies. It must also be consistent with a new National Planning Framework which – (it is envisaged once developed) ,will replace the National Spatial Strategy.

An important part of the rationale for enhanced local government role in economic development is to forge a stronger link between spatial planning and economic development. Therefore, the HLGOA and subsequent LECP is a central component of the local authority implementation role in economic development and local/ community development of existing plans. It is influenced by existing and future national, regional and statutory local hierarchy of plans across the economic, social and planning and land use areas/ sectors but does not in itself influence other plans. Therefore, the HLGOA as part of the LECPs role is complementary and it is not anticipated that the LECP will have significant environmental effect on other Plans.

***the relevance of the High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions in the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development,***

The Local Government Reform Act (66B) states that every LECP shall be consistent with the core strategy, the objectives of the development plan, any regional spatial and economic strategies that apply to the area of the Plan, and shall consist of a written statement which may include objectives for the sustainable development of the area of the Plan. The LECP has been developed in accordance with this legislation and higher level plans which have been subject to full SEA and seek to promote sustainable development.

The preparation of the HLGOA has been underpinned by a number of guiding principles; of particular relevance are the target set out in EU 2020, which ' *will be the basis for the development of objectives and targets in the LECP<sup>1</sup>* ' These targets are employment, research and development, climate change and energy sustainability, education and poverty and social inclusion. These targets have formed the themes for the LECP HLGOA; climate change and energy sustainability is the target with most direct and obvious sustainable development aspect.

***Environmental problems relevant to the High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions***

The SEA ER of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 as varied, provides considerable detail

<sup>1</sup> Draft Socio Economic Statement page 4.

on environmental problems relevant to the County. The High Level Goals and Strategic objectives contained in the HLGOA that support a quality of life for all, responses to climate change and enhanced biodiversity are particularly relevant to environmental problems in the county, i.e.: climate change and energy efficiency challenges, and providing a good quality environment for all to live and work within. Examples include *SCO 5: Create a safe and secure physical and social environment for the people of the county*, and *SEDO 3: Create a county that is responsive to climate change and acts as a custodian of our natural heritage*.

There are numerous areas of environmental sensitivity within the County, many of which are designated under the legislative framework. These include: Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas, Proposed National Heritage Areas (pNHA), views and prospects, Architectural and Archeological Conservation Areas, protected structures, recorded monuments and structures, and recreational and amenity areas. Details of these areas together with aims and policies for their protection are set out in the Clare CDP 2011-2017, as varied and the accompanying SEA and AA.

The environmental report conducted as part of the SEA process on the entire content of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 discussed various issues of concern in the plan area (County Clare) and provided various mitigating measure to decrease impacts considered to be severe or significant.

As already stated the LCEP must ensure consistency with the CDP which sets out the framework for development and landuse. It should be noted specifically that the Clare County Development Plan sets out an employment, economy and enterprise strategy (Chapter 6) and addresses social inclusion, community, educational and cultural development (Chapter 5). These two chapters and specially the policies and objectives contained therein as well as the core strategy of the plan provide the premise and the framework from which the LECP will be based upon.

As Annex A to this screening report shows, the HLGOA does not conflict with the objectives of the Development Plan with regard to environmental problems. In using the Development Plan as the framework from which to develop the LECP, the policies and objectives seeking to protect and conserve environmental sensitive areas within the County Clare will not be in any way altered or affected the LECP.

***the relevance of the High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions in the implementation of European Union legislation on the environment (e.g. plans linked to waste-management or water protection).***

The LECP is to be consistent with existing national and regional policy documents which includes policies relating to environmental protection, water supply, water quality, ground water, waste management, landscape and cultural heritage in compliance with EU legislation. These include the *Water Framework Directive, Groundwater Directive, Habitats Directive and Birds Directive*. The Theme Climate Change and Energy in the HLGOA is of particular relevance in assisting the implementation of the EU 2020 Package (EU 2009/28).

**2. Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected, having regard, in particular, to:**

***the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects,***

The LECP will operate for a six year period, and as stated above must be compliant and consistent with the statutory planning framework. The HLGOA does not provide or identify additional or different landuse activities or directions through the goals or themes and as Annex A demonstrates, these goals are consistent with many objectives in the Clare CDP 2011-2017.

Therefore it is considered that any potential environmental effects arising from projects associated with the LECP would be addressed and assessed under the existing statutory planning framework. As the LECP is consistent with the CDP a more sustainable approach to development is embedded within the HLGOA and negative environmental effects are avoided, and promotion of positive environmental effects may be achieved through consistency with the Clare CDP 2011-2017.

***the cumulative nature of the effects,***

Given that the HLGOA does not direct activities to areas or identify landuse activities *per se*, cumulative effects are not identified to arise. Once the environmental protection measures within the County Development Plan are followed, adhered to and implemented, it is predicted that the HLGOA would not give rise to cumulative effects.

***the transboundary nature of the effects***

In terms of negative transboundary environmental effects/impacts it is considered that with proper regard and consistency with the environmental protection policies and objectives contained in the adopted 2011-2017 Development Plan and the completion of appropriate environmental assessments and planning process for any proposed development arising from the LECP, no negative transboundary environmental effects are predicted.

***the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents),***

As above, the HLGOA is not identified as giving rise to effects that would present as risks to human health or the environment given its consistency with the objectives contained in the Clare CDP 2011-2017 as varied.

***the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected).***

As stated above, effects should they arise are identified as positive where consistency with the development plan is achieved and/or effects are addressed through the statutory planning framework. The HLGOA does not zone additional lands and the quantity of lands zoned in the Clare CDP 2011-2017 as varied is predicated by the projected population figures (particularly housing and the core strategy). As no activities have been identified within the statement there is no identified effect on a geographical area or spatial extent.

***the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to:***

***(a) special natural characteristics or cultural heritage***

The County has numerous areas designated under natural and cultural heritage including 37 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), 10 Special Protection Areas (SPAs), 14 Natural Heritage Areas

(NHAs) and 61 proposed Natural Heritage Areas (pNHAs). There are also a number of other sites across the County that have been designated for environmental and/or ecological protection. These sites include the Burren National Park, one Ramsar site (Galway Bay), 5 Wildlife Sanctuaries and 4 Nature Reserves.

Over 7,500 archaeological sites are recorded within the county with certain clusters present in areas such as the Burren; 870 protected structures are listed in the County and a number of landscapes and scenic routes are also designated.

The HLGOA will not set the context for landuse or development activities outside of that already facilitated within existing landuse plans and therefore no areas likely to be affected are identified.

**(b) exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values,**

It is anticipated that environmental quality standards will not be exceeded by the HLGOA. The HLGOA is consistent and compliant with the Clare CDP 2011-2017 as varied including specific provisions regarding environmental quality standards such as those contained in the Water Framework Directive and other environmental standards.

**(c) intensive land-use,**

The HLGOA does not provide for additional landuse or intensification of same; landuse zonings will remain as provided in the relevant CDP 2011-2017 and local area plans.

Therefore such effects are not identified.

**(d) the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, European Union or international protection status.**

The Clare CDP 2011-2017 recognises the importance of sites with National and European designations and sets out policies and objectives for their protection. These include sites designated under the EU Birds, and Habitats Directive, the Geopark designation and the National Park amongst others.

Given the consistency of the themes and goals of the HLGOA with the Clare CDP 2011-2017 as varied it is not considered the implementation of the HLGOA as part of the LECP, in line with sustainable development and consistent with the policies and objectives of the plan, will have significant negative effects on areas or landscapes which have recognised national, European Union or international protection status.

A Habitats Directive Screening Statement has been prepared in tandem with this SEA Screening to assess if likely significant effects arise in relation to conservation management objectives of European Sites and the LECP. This has found that no such effects are identified. .

## 2.2 CONCLUSION TO SEA SCREENING ASSESSMENT

Section 9 (1) of the (2004) Regulations (S.I. No. 435) states *“subject to sub-article (2), an environmental assessment shall be carried out for all plans and programmes*

*(a) which are prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water management, telecommunications and tourism, and which set the*

*framework for future development consent of projects listed in Annexes I and II to the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive, or*

*(b) which are not directly connected with or necessary to the management of a European site but, either individually or in combination with other plans, are likely to have a significant effect on any such site.”*

The HLGOA presents the third stage in the LECP preparation. It details high level goals, strategic objectives and actions that extend across a number of sectors including some of those listed above such as energy and tourism. However, it has been established that the plan itself will not set the framework for future development consent of projects and is required to be consistent with the RPGs, Development Plans or any higher level plans and not present alternate or competing proposals that would lead to inconsistency. Whilst it is acknowledged that there are a number of environmental sensitivities present within County Clare, any projects that may arise in the future associated with the LECP will be subject to the requirements of the relevant national planning procedures and be consistent with existing frameworks and Development Plans as appropriate all of which have been subject to SEA and developed in accordance with the principles of sustainability.

In summary, the high level goals, strategic objectives and actions are not deemed to set the framework for future development consent of projects listed in the EIA Directive in Annex I and II. In this regard, they will not be placing limits on activities or development, influence location, nature, size or operating conditions nor will they dictate or specifically direct the allocation of resources at this juncture. Therefore, on the basis of the above assessment and consideration of the criteria as set out in Schedule 2a of the Regulations 2011 (as amended) it is considered the HLGOA is unlikely to give rise to significant environmental effects and does not require full SEA. A final determination however will not be made until the specified environmental authorities have been consulted.

## ANNEX A: DETAILED COMMENTARY

### A.1 INTRODUCTION

A review of the High Level Goals, Objectives and Actions was undertaken in order to establish consistency with the existing Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017 as varied. As can be seen from below, many goals are supported through various chapters of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, as amended. Many of the goals are also consistent with other higher level multi-sectoral policies and documents such as those proposals put forward in “Putting People First”, the EU 2020 Strategy, the Rural Development Programme (2014-2020), LEADER, the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and the recent report and recommendations of the Commission for the Economic Development of Rural Areas (CEDRA).

The following table provides a commentary on each of the high level goals, strategic objectives and actions contained with the identified themes. All relevant objectives of the Clare CDP 2011-2017 will be applied as appropriate, and the following objectives are of particular significance in terms of ensuring environmental protection through the LECF.

CDP 6.8 High Quality Development and Inclusive Design for all Forms of Economic Development It is an objective of the Development Plan: a To encourage the development of attractive and healthy working environments in such a way that the character and quality of an area is improved and by ensuring that the design of economic development, regardless of location, is high quality, inclusive and accessible; b To ensure that the design of new commercial development addresses the challenges of both climate change and pressures on the natural and historic environment c To prepare, within the Local Area Plans, Masterplans for strategic industrial and commercially zoned areas

CDP 6.11 Development Plan Objective: Natural Resources:

It is an objective of Clare County Council: To facilitate, encourage and appropriately manage the development of natural resources of the County and to ensure that this is done in a sensitive way, eliminating any significant adverse effects on the natural environment.

CDP 9.1 Development Plan Objective: Water Framework Directive:

It is an objective of Clare County Council: a To facilitate the implementation of the Shannon River Basin Management Plan and the Western River Basin Management Plan for ground, surface, estuarine, coastal and transitional waters in the Plan area as part of the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive; b To consider proposals for development where it can be clearly demonstrated that the development will meet the requirements of the relevant River Basin Management Plan.

CDP 9.15 Development Plan Objective: Strategic Flood Risk Assessment It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure that proposals for development in areas where there is a risk of flooding, (based on the flood risk maps contained in Volume 2 of the Clare County Development Plan 2011-2017, or any updated version), shall have regard to the OPW/DoEHLG planning guidelines The

Planning System & Flood Risk Management (and Technical Appendices) – Guidelines for Planning Authorities (Nov 2009) and any future OPW flood assessment information, and such proposals must also demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be put in place.

CDP 9.2 Development Plan Objective: Protection of Water Resources

It is an objective of the Development Plan: To permit development where it can be clearly demonstrated that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on the water environment, including surface water, groundwater quality and quantity, designated source protection areas, river corridors and associated wetlands, estuarine waters, coastal and transitional waters.

CDP16.1 Development Plan Objective: Landscape Character Assessment It is an objective of Clare County Council: To encourage the utilisation of the Landscape Character Assessment of County Clare and other relevant landscape policy and guidelines and to have regard to them in the management, enhancement and promotion of the landscapes of County Clare.

CDP 17.2: Development Plan Objective: Conservation and Environmental Management It is an objective of Clare County Council: To ensure the sustainable management and conservation of areas of natural and geological heritage within the County

CDP 17.3 Development Plan Objective: Natura 2000 Sites It is an objective of Clare County Council: a To afford the highest level of protection to all designated Natura 2000 sites in accordance with the relevant Directives and legislation on such matters; b To require all planning applications for development within, adjacent to, or with the potential to affect a Natura 2000 site to submit a Natura Impact Statement in accordance with the Habitats Directive (1992); c To recognise and afford appropriate protection to any new or modified SPAs or SACs that are identified during the lifetime of this Plan.

CDP 17.8 Development Plan Objective: Non-designated Sites It is an objective of Clare County Council: a To ensure the protection and conservation of areas, sites, species and ecological networks/ corridors of local biodiversity value outside of designated sites throughout the County; b To complete the Habitat Mapping of the County (in accordance with A Guide to Habitats in Ireland – The Heritage Council 2000) in order to identify and record the natural habitats of the County at a detailed level and afford appropriate protection to areas of importance, as required.

CDP 17.9 Development Plan Objective: It is an objective of Clare County Council: a To protect and promote the sustainable management of the natural heritage, flora and fauna of the County through the promotion of biodiversity, the conservation of natural habitats and the enhancement of new and existing habitats; b To promote the conservation of biodiversity through the protection of local sites of biodiversity importance and wildlife corridors, both within and between the designated sites and the wider Plan area.

17.18 Development Plan Objective: Mitigation measures from Habitats Directive and Strategic Environmental Assessment It is an objective of Clare County Council: a To require, where

appropriate, that all plans and programmes comply with the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC; b To require, where appropriate, that all plans and projects comply with the requirements of the Habitats Directive.

CDP 18.5 Development Plan Objective: Sites, Features and Objects of Archaeological Interest It is an objective of Clare County Council: a To safeguard sites, features and objects of archaeological interest generally; b To secure the preservation (i.e. preservation in situ or in exceptional cases preservation by record) of all archaeological monuments included in the Record of Monuments and Places as established under Section 12 of the National Monuments (Amendment) Act, 1994, and of sites, features and objects of archaeological and historical interest generally; c In securing such preservation, to have regard to the advice and recommendations of the Department of the Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht Affairs; d To have regard to the government publication Framework and Principles for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage 1999 in relation to protecting sites, features and objects of archaeological interest.

**TABLE A: SEA COMMENTARY AND CONSISTENCY WITH CLARE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2011-17 AS VARIED.**

**THEME: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE**

<b>Text</b>	<b>SEA Commentary</b>
<b>High Level Goal: An Economic culture that is pro-enterprise/pro-entrepreneur.</b>	<i>This goal relates to fostering a culture to support entrepreneurs and does not have direct impacts on environmental resources. Objective 6.4 Third Level Institutions and the Knowledge Economy supports this goal.</i>
Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) <i>SEDO 1: Ensure adequate, co-ordinated and monitored delivery of enterprise supports</i>	<i>This objective does not give rise to direct impacts on environmental resources.</i>
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	
<i>e.e.1 Establish a structure within the LCDC and the Economic Development &amp; Enterprise SPC to co-ordinate, monitor and proof the delivery of all the Economic Development, Employment and Enterprise, Research and Development, Climate Change and Energy actions in the LECP</i>	<i>This action aims to ensure consistency with the LECP actions and would not give rise to environmental impacts.</i>
<b>High Level Goal: An Economic market attractive to Investors and Entrepreneurs</b>	This goal is consistent with Objectives as such as 6.1 Employment, Economy and Enterprise Promotion and 6.2 Working in Partnership.
Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) <i>SEDO 2: Increase the number of micro- enterprises and related employment in the County</i>	This objective is not location specific and would be subject to compliance with requirements of the Clare CDP as varied, no environmental impacts are identified.
<b>Strategic Actions</b>	<b>SEA Commentary</b>
<i>e2.1 Implement the LEO Action Plan for Enterprise start-ups</i>	<i>As above</i>
<i>e2.2 Implement the LDS support programme for micro-enterprise</i>	<i>As above</i>
<i>e2.3 Implement the LDS support programme for tourism enterprise development</i>	<i>As above</i>
<i>e2.4 Promote, support and develop specific locations for smaller scale foreign direct investment through the Connect Ireland initiative</i>	<i>Specific locations for such activities would be required to be identified through landuse zoning or appropriate policies and</i>

Text	SEA Commentary
	<i>objectives in the Clare CDP as varied. No impacts on environmental resources are identified.</i>
e2.5 <i>Support the development of the food sector i.e. development of a food brand and food enterprises</i>	<i>Not location specific and any new development would be required to be in compliance with the Clare CDP.</i>
e2.6 <i>Support the development of existing enterprise centres and incubation space for micro-enterprises</i>	<i>No impacts on environmental resources are identified for this action.</i>
e2.7 <i>Develop and implement a pro-active tourism strategy for the county which is linked to internationally focussed tourism propositions such as the Wild Atlantic Way and the Lakelands and more local specific themes</i>	<i>CDP 12.1 and 12.2 are related to this action which relates only to the development of such a strategy. No environmental impacts are identified for this action.</i>
e2.8 <i>Promote and support the development of social enterprises</i>	<i>No environmental impacts identified for this action.</i>
<b>High Level Goal: An Economic market attractive to Investors and Entrepreneurs</b>	CDP Objective 6.2 Working in Partnership reflects this particular goal. No environmental impacts are identified.
SEDO 3: <i>Increase the number of small (10-50 employees) and medium (50-250 employees) enterprises</i>	Not location specific and does not give rise to environmental impacts.
Strategic Actions	
e3.1 <i>Deliver mentoring, management and marketing programmes to High Potential Start-Ups</i>	<i>This goal is consistent with CDP Objectives such as: 6.1 Employment, Economy and Enterprise Promotion and 6.2 Working in Partnership. No environmental impacts associated with this action.</i>
e3.2 <i>Deliver supports to businesses operating in the domestic market who are in the expansion phase of their businesses</i>	<i>As above</i>
e3.3 <i>Support businesses that do not qualify under current programmes</i>	<i>As above</i>
<b>High Level Goal: An Economic market attractive to Investors and Entrepreneurs</b>	This goal is consistent with Objectives as outlined above, ie: 6.1 Employment, Economy and Enterprise Promotion and 6.2 Working in Partnership.
SEDO 4: <i>Attract Foreign Direct Investment and large enterprises</i>	<i>As above</i>
Strategic Actions	
e4.1 <i>Promote the economic comparative advantage of locating in County Clare</i>	<i>As above</i>
e4.2 <i>Develop a business case for investing in County Clare</i>	<i>As above</i>
e4.3 <i>Attract EU investment to the County (e.g. Urban Development Fund) for major projects including the Clare County Library, remodelling of town centre schemes etc</i>	<i>Should additional development be associated with this action, it would require compliance with relevant policies and objectives of the Clare CDP. No environmental impacts are identified for this action.</i>
e4.4 <i>Promote Clare as a low carbon economy as a means of attracting inward investment</i>	<i>CDP 9.13 address this action.</i>
<b>High Level Goal: An Economic offering world-class, highly-skilled and flexible labour force</b>	This high level goal is not location specific and is consistent with a number of Objectives in the Clare CDP including: Goal V and CDP 6.1 Employment, Economy and Enterprise Promotion
SEDO 5: <i>Increase the number, skills and educational qualifications of the employed</i>	<i>As above</i>
Strategic Actions	
e5.1 <i>Increase third level participation rates particularly in the mathematical based disciplines (e.g. accounting, engineering, ICT</i>	<i>No environmental impacts identified for this action.</i>

Text	SEA Commentary
etc)	
e5.2 Increase fourth level achievement rates	As above
e5.3 Develop apprenticeship programmes relevant to the needs of businesses and the skills of the labour force	As above
e5.4 Deliver programmes for continual development in business, organisation management, professions and skills	As above
e5.5 Provide the county's adult population with the relevant education and training to enable them to compete for job opportunities as they arise	As above
SEDO 6: Increase the role of towns and villages as rural economic hubs	Promoting economic regeneration in existing settlements is a more efficient use of resources and services; this goal is consistent with a number of objectives particularly in Chapter 13 of the Clare CDP such as Objective CDP 13.2 Rural Facilities. Other relevant Objectives include Objective 3.4 Small Towns, 3.5 Large Villages and 3.6 Small Villages
Strategic Actions	
e6.1 Undertake a socio-economic analysis of a number of the county's towns and villages with a view to preparing a plan to identify their potential for improved quality of life and advancing rural economic regeneration	No environmental impacts identified for this action.

## THEME: QUALITY OF LIFE, HEALTH AND WELLBEING

<b>High Level Goal: A Society that is Inclusive and cherishes People's Health, Participation and Solidarity</b>	This goal is supported through Objective CDP 5.2
Strategic Actions SCO1: Ensure adequate, co-ordinated, proofed, monitored and delivery of social inclusion supports	As above
q1.1 Establish a structure within the LCDC and the Economic & Enterprise SPC to co-ordinate, monitor and proof the delivery of all the Quality of Life, Health & Wellbeing, Education & Training actions	As above
<b>High Level Goal: A Society that is Inclusive and cherishes People's Health, Participation and Solidarity</b>	This goal is also supported through Objective CDP 5.2
Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) SCO 2: Reduce the number of Small Areas (CSO definition) that are 'deprived' or 'very deprived' and reduce the number of individuals 'at risk of poverty' or experiencing 'basic deprivation'	As above
Strategic Actions	
q2.1 Implement all local and community development programmes and services in the County for the benefit of those 'at risk' of poverty and/or experiencing 'basic deprivation' and/or living in 'deprived communities' having regard to gender equality e.g. LDS, SICAP, County Childcare Strategy, Sports Partnership Strategic Plan, Clare Youth Strategy, Intreo, LCETB Strategic Framework 2015-2020	As above
Deliver RAPID type interventions where deprived small areas are clustered	No environmental impacts are identified for this action.
<b>High Level Goal: A Society that is Inclusive and cherishes People's Health, Participation and Solidarity</b>	CDP Objective 5.2 supports this goal

Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) <i>SCO 3: Reduce unemployment levels in the County</i>	Not identified as giving rise to environmental impacts.
Strategic Actions	
q3.1 <i>Pursue labour market activation programmes that benefit the unemployed</i>	As above
q3.2 <i>Increase qualifications and skills of the unemployed especially the long-term unemployed and young people (18-24) not in employment, education or training</i>	As above
q3.3 <i>Engage long term unemployed men with in structures where they are comfortable (e.g. Men's Shed Programmes etc)</i>	As above
<b>High Level Goal: A Society that is Inclusive and cherishes People's Health, Participation and Solidarity.</b>	CDP Objective 5.2 supports this goal
Sustainable Community Objectives (SCO) <i>SCO4: Improve the well-being and quality of life for vulnerable communities, families, youth, children and individuals in the county (i.e. people who are vulnerable to unemployment, psychological distress, social and physical isolation, neglect and abuse)</i>	This goal is supported throughout the Clare CDP for example through objectives contained in Chapters Five and 13 of the plan.
Strategic Actions	
q4.1 <i>Support older people to continue living as valued members of the community, recognising their contribution and heeding their particular needs</i>	CDP Objective 5.2 supports this action
q4.2 <i>Support initiatives that foster positive mental health and physical health of the people of the County</i>	No environmental impacts identified for this action.
q4.3 <i>Support inter-agency co-ordination and collaboration to achieve best outcomes for all Children and Young People in the County</i>	Objective 5.2 of the CDP supports this action
q4.4 <i>Support the provision of and access to community-based mental health supports and facilities</i>	As above
q4.5 <i>Support people whose employment is vulnerable or who experience difficulty in returning to the workforce</i>	As above
q4.6 <i>Ensure that the Local Development Strategy reflects the identified needs of the county</i>	CDP 5.1 supports this action.
q4.7 <i>Support people who are living in remote locations of the county/isolated circumstances</i>	As above
q4.8 <i>Support the development of a countywide programme of youth activities and infrastructure (e.g. Youth Clubs/Hang-outs</i>	As above
q4.9 <i>Develop specific supports for young people 'at risk'</i>	No environmental impacts identified for this action
<b>High Level Goal: A Society where People, Neighbourhoods and Communities are Safe and Secure.</b>	This goal will enhance quality of life and support safer communities. It is not identified as giving rise to environmental effects but would relate in part to Objectives contained within Chapter 20 Regeneration and Renewal of the Clare CDP.
Strategic Actions <i>SCO 5: Create a safe and secure physical and social environment for the people of the county</i>	
q5.1 <i>Support the work of the Joint Policing Committee in preventing crime, protecting vulnerable members of the community and addressing anti-social behaviour</i>	As above
q5.2 <i>Support intergenerational approaches to crime prevention and the achievement of a sense of social security and personal safety</i>	As above
<b>High Level Goal: A Society that is Socially and Physically Connected</b>	This goal is supported throughout the Clare CDP for example through objectives contained in Chapters Five and 13 of the plan.
Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) <i>SCO 6: Increase the provision of infrastructure for environmental, social, transport and ICT needs</i>	A number of objectives in the CDP are consistent with this goal, most notably Goal XVIII. CDP Objectives 10.16 ICT and

		11.4 Community transport also support this objective.
<b>Strategic Actions</b>		
q6.1	Support the provision of communities' sporting and physical facilities and activities	CDP 5.1 supports this action
q6.2	Support volunteering, volunteers and their infrastructural needs as well as employment outcomes	No environmental impacts identified for this action.
q6.3	Support sustainable transport initiatives in the County that complement existing public and private transport services and the provision of associated infrastructure including stops, shelters and service and timetable information	CDP Objective 11.4 supports this action
q 6.4	Investigate piloting a group broadband scheme in a number of black-spot areas	No environmental impacts identified for this action.
q6.5	Support the implementation of plans that enhance the environment eg the Shannon Green Infrastructure plan g	Strategic Aims 17.1 of the CDP support this action.
Q6.6	Support the implementation of plans that enhance the county's physical connectivity e.g. Limerick Northern Distributor Road, Shannon Crossing at Ballina/Killaloe	Clare CDP 11.1 and 11.2 support this action.
<b>High Level Goal: A Society that is Culturally Rich with Strong Identities</b>		The Goals of the Clare CDP support this high level goal as do a number of supporting objectives particularly those contained in Chapters 17 and 18
<i>SCO 7: Strengthen community's identities and the county's cultural and built heritage</i>		As above
<b>Strategic Actions</b>		
q7.1	Support place-making initiatives that enhance our towns and villages e.g. Ennis 2020 Plan	As above
q7.2	Support the growth of community arts and the work of community artists including the provision of related infrastructure	Objective 5.9 of the Clare CDP supports this action.
q7.3	Develop and protect the county's sites of heritage and historic importance to the benefit of communities and visitors to the county e.g. Scatterry Island, Holy Island	As above
q7.4	Develop a single central facility for the county's public library and ancillary services	Should a new development be associated with this action, it would require compliance with relevant policies and objectives of the Clare CDP; no environmental impacts are identified.

## THEME: EDUCATION & TRAINING

<b>High Level Goal: A Learning environment that addresses educational disadvantage and achieves High Educational Participation rates.</b>		This goal is supported indirectly through CDP 5.6 Educational Facilities and CDP 5.7 Third Level Institutes and is not identified as giving rise to environmental effects.
<i>SCO 1: Increase participation and achievement rates at second and third level</i>		
<b>Strategic Actions</b>		
t1.1	Implement a 'schools completion' type programme in a number of schools where retention is a challenge at primary and secondary level	No environmental impacts identified for this action.
t1.2	Implement a range of post secondary and third level access programmes	This goal is consistent with objectives contained in Chapter Five of the CDP, most notably Objectives CDP 5.5 and 5.6
t1.3	Support the mental health of the county's young people thus helping them to remain in and progress through the education system	No environmental impacts identified for this action.

t1.4	<i>Provide targeted educational and developmental interventions to children and young people in need of such supports</i>	<i>This goal is consistent with objectives contained in Chapter Five of the CDP, most notably Objectives CDP 5.5 and 5.6</i>
	<b>High Level Goal: A Learning environment with Broad Participation in Further / Higher Education, continual learning and development.</b>	This goal is supported indirectly through CDP 5.6 Educational Facilities and CDP 5.7 Third Level Institutes and is not identified as giving rise to environmental effects.
	SCO 2 : <i>Increase participation levels in further / higher education, continual learning and development</i>	As above
	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	
t2.1	<i>Deliver an extensive programme of further and higher education to people outside the labour force (i.e. those at work and the unemployed) and older people</i>	<i>No environmental impacts identified for this action.</i>
t2.2	<i>Provide childcare services, supports and incentives to those who wish to access further and higher education</i>	<i>Goal IV and Objective CDP 5.5 Community, Social and Cultural Facilities are consistent with this goal which is not identified as giving rise to environmental effects.</i>
t2.3	<i>Develop and implement innovative developmental initiatives that encourage and empower individuals to consider and engage with learning opportunities</i>	<i>As t.2.1 and SCO 2</i>
t2.4	<i>Support older people to participate in continual learning and development</i>	<i>As above</i>

## THEME: RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

	<b>High Level Goal: Exploit the Enterprise/Social/Academic partnerships.</b>	This is not identified as giving rise to environmental effects as it relates to a partnership approach. It is supported by Objective 5.7 that provides for partnership and research and development opportunities at Third Level.
	Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) SEDO 1: <i>Increase Enterprise R &amp; D activity</i>	As above
	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	
	<i>Develop collaborative networks of sufficient scale to investigate R &amp; D opportunities</i>	<i>As above</i>
	<i>Develop partnerships between third level institutions and key industries in order to exploit R &amp; D opportunities</i>	<i>As above</i>
	Sustainable Community Objectives (SCO) SCO 1: <i>Increase social research activity</i>	No environmental impacts identified for this objective
	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	
	<i>Examine root causes of poverty and social exclusion and identify best practice in addressing the root causes and monitor progress</i>	<i>As above</i>
	<b>High Level Goal: Optimise R &amp; D opportunities and spin-off.</b>	This is not identified as giving rise to environmental effects as it relate to a partnership approach. It is supported by Objective 5.7 that provides for partnership and research and development opportunities at Third Level.
	Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) SEDO 2: <i>Create new R &amp; D market opportunities and increase supply chain activity</i>	This not specifically addressed in the CDP but would be indirectly supported by Objective 5.7.
	<b>Strategic Actions</b>	
	<i>Develop the commercial potential of R &amp; D activity i.e. by converting results of R &amp; D into viable enterprises</i>	<i>As above</i>

<i>Develop spin-off by way of supply chain activity i.e. that small businesses are encouraged to service the needs of larger enterprises</i>	<i>As above</i>
--	-----------------

## THEME: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY

<b>High Level Goal: Pursue Energy Efficiency solutions</b>	Chapter Ten of the Clare CDP addresses energy including renewable energy and energy efficiency.
Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) <i>SEDO 1: Increase energy efficiency in the County</i>	Objectives 6.7 supports this goal
Strategic Actions	
<i>c1.1 Support energy efficiency in industry and communal programmes at town and village level and in households</i>	<i>As above</i>
<i>c1.2 Support public sector bodies to achieve ISO Energy Standards</i>	<i>As above</i>
<b>High Level Goal: Collectively and individually engage in Renewable Energy Production</b>	Chapter Ten of the Clare CDP addresses energy including renewable energy and energy efficiency.
Sustainable Economic Development Objectives (SEDO) <i>SEDO 2: Expand renewable energy production in the County</i>	As above, a range of objective supports this action including: Objective 10.2 in particular.
Strategic Actions	
<i>c2.1 Support renewable energy production on land and off-shore by a range of appropriate technologies</i>	<i>Objectives 10.2 and 10.4 support this action.</i>
<b>High Level Goal: Proactively address Climate Change.</b>	These goals are consistent with a number of CDP objectives and policies and Goal xiv of the CDPs supports this particular high level goal.
<i>SEDO 3: Create a county that is responsive to climate change and acts as a custodian of our natural heritage</i>	<i>As above</i>
Strategic Actions	
<i>c3.1 Support awareness of and responses to climate change</i>	<i>Objective 9.3 supports this action</i>
<i>c3.2 Support awareness of and protect and enhance the county's natural heritage and biodiversity</i>	<i>A suite of objectives in Chapter 17 support this action.</i>
<i>c3.3 Develop a Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the county</i>	<i>Objective 9.3 supports this action</i>