



**Shannon  
Chamber**  
Advancing business together

**CLARE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**DRAFT CLIMATE ACTION PLAN**

**2024 - 2029**

**SHANNON CHAMBER SUBMISSION**

**November 2023**

## Shannon Chamber & Clare County Council Aligned Strategic Sustainability Objectives

Strategic Objective 6 in Shannon Chamber's Strategic Plan 2023 – 2026 states that Shannon Chamber will:

### Collaborate on Promoting Sustainability and Renewable Energy

- We will act upon this commitment by **creating awareness of the five SDGs** (as selected by Chambers Ireland) in all communications with members and elsewhere.
- We will create a platform to **brainstorm and undertake initiatives** that can enable Shannon and the region to play a meaningful role in Ireland attaining its national targets.
- We will work towards **positioning Shannon and the region as an exemplar contributor to sustainable development**.

Having reviewed Clare County Council's comprehensive and all-encompassing Draft Climate Action Plan 2024 – 2029 and noted that:

*'The plan recognises that climate action is a collective responsibility that affects every aspect of our lives and will involve public bodies, individuals, communities and businesses throughout the county',*

we believe that there will be many opportunities for collaborative undertakings between Shannon Chamber and Clare County Council in the delivery of this Plan.

This response focuses in on areas that, we believe, offer opportunity for such collaboration and/or periodic consultation between our two organisations.

## 1. Input to Shannon Town Local Area Plan Aligned with Objectives BE2, BE3 and T1

Shannon Chamber's input to the Shannon Town Local Area Plan, *as set out below*, is aligned with Objectives **BE2, BE3 and T1** of the Climate Action Plan.

### CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, FLOODING AND DRAINAGE

**Q: What are the main environmental issues facing Shannon Town and Environs and how can the Local Area Plan address these?**

- Flood relief works are planned. Some work has been completed by the airport. The plans for areas protecting the industrial zone and town need to be implemented. In doing so the amenity and leisure value of the existing walkways along the embankments should be protected, enhanced, and widened to include cycle and other e-friendly options.
- This will also serve to protect the treeline, birdwatch and wetland strengths of the area. All of these contribute to social wellbeing as well as to an attractive and sustainable environment.

**Q: How can the Local Area Plan achieve a balance between the growth of Shannon Town and Environs and the protection of the environment?**

- Develop areas for nature and more sports fields.
- Designated protected areas, particularly close to the river could be implemented and other areas prioritized for housing.
- Develop a carbon neutral/saving plan (model) for the town i.e., more industry, lower emissions from all industry, inhabitants etc.

**Q: How can Shannon Town and Environs be established as a centre for low carbon commerce and community?**

- As highlight in earlier comments, there is potential to properly manage and extend the thousands of trees and shrubs that were planted in the 1970s and 1980s.
- They serve as wind shelters, absorbers of excess moisture and carbon and have strong amenity and biodiversity value.
- Encourage government to extend the grants to entice all business and homeowners to install some green energy, solar panels, heat pumps.
- Council to engage with industry and Shannon inhabitants - collaboratively working together versus through regulation, back-office decisions etc.

**Q: How can the Local Area Plan best promote and support a modal shift towards more sustainable modes of transport?**

- Timing and frequency of bus services.
- Taxi services are limited.
- Introduce ride sharing options.
- Locate drop off and pick up points for bike sharing at a greater number of locations around the town.
- more e-bikes like are currently available and electric bus around the town.
- Charging locations for EV transport modes and increase car charge points.

We look forward to the actions, which relate in full or part to Shannon, being further implemented, most notably:

**Actions B2.3, B2.4, B2.6**  
**Actions B3.1, B3.2, B,5**  
**Action T1.1, T1.4, T1.5, T1.6, T1.9, T1.10 and T1.11**

We welcome the improvements that have already been undertaken in the provision of new and improved bus shelters in the town and the public consultation currently underway re the Shannon Town & Environs Flood Relief Scheme.



## 2. Opportunities to Align with Objectives C1, C2 and N1

We refer to the following Objectives in the Draft Climate Action Plan:

**Objective C1**, which aims to *‘Promote awareness and facilitate engagement on climate related issues in County Clare.’*

**Objective C2**, which aims to *‘Support communities, enterprises, and individuals to access the capacity, skills, and investment necessary to accelerate climate action’.*

**Objective N1**, which aims to *‘Protect, conserve, and enhance County Clare’s biodiversity and heritage through the implementation of effective climate-related actions’.*

Having set up an industry-led Mid-West Sustainability Network in 2023, with a mission:

**To be the Greenest Industrial Region in Ireland**

**attained through**

**Supporting our members in their sustainability journeys and in the delivery of their sustainability goals**

We believe the similarity in Shannon Chamber’s and Clare County Council’s objectives warrants collaboration, where appropriate, particularly with regard to:

**Actions C1.1, C1.2, C1.3, C1.4, C2.2 and C2.5**

**and**

**Actions N1.1, N1.2, N1.3, N1.5 and N1.11**

To date, in 2023, the Mid-West Sustainability Network has held a number of workshops and a Sustainability Week, which included a Sustainability Conference, focused on the 4 key climate action pillars – **Waste, Waste, Energy and Biodiversity**. The Network promotes the sharing of best practice among members and has plans to roll-out many new initiatives in 2024.

Hence, we believe that there will be merit in both organisations – Clare County Council and Shannon Chamber - aligning effort in instances where collaboration will expediate climate action gains for the county.

### 3. Potential for Shannon to be developed as a pilot Decarbonisation Zone?

We note in 5.1.1 the definition of a ‘Decarbonisation Zone (DZ)’ and the stages involved in developing such a zone, and look forward to seeing the benefits to be derived from the actions set in the Draft Climate Action Plan for the county’s first DZ – Kilkee and the Loop Head Peninsula.

Given that Shannon is renowned for a series of ‘firsts’, most notably the world’s first duty-free zone and Ireland’s first new town of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Shannon Chamber would be extremely interested in exploring the potential for Shannon to be a designated DZ, particularly in light of the ambition of the Mid-West Sustainability Network and the spotlight that this Network is placing on the region become the ‘Greenest Industrial Region in Ireland’.

With Shannon at the southern end of the county and Kilkee / Loop Head Peninsula at the northern end, each with different economic drivers, the former, industry, and the latter, tourism, the potential to develop exemplar areas with differing baseline emission inventories, stakeholders, and potential projects, would warrant examination and inclusion.

### 4. Implementation, Monitoring and Reporting

We note that the Draft Climate Action Plan lists over 87 actions that will be delivered over the short, medium, and long-term to achieve the strategic goals and objectives set out in the plan.

Whilst it is stated that these actions many take a number of years into the future to deliver, we would suggest that the terms:

**Short-Term**  
**Medium-Term**  
**Long-Term**

be allocated quantifiable timelines e.g., Q/Year, in the lifetime of the Plan (2024 – 2029) otherwise there is no clear indication as to whether the actions will be complete by the Plan period, end 2029. Specific attainable timelines have been given for BE3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 only.

## **CONCLUSION**

Shannon Chamber welcomes this focus by Clare County Council on reducing carbon emissions internally in the organisation, and, for Co. Clare, through creating the environment for all stakeholders in the county to play their part in creating a better, cleaner, and climate-friendly environment in which to live, work and spending leisure time in.

Shannon Chamber is committed to attaining the same outcomes for its members and for the community it which we operate.

As outlined in this response, we will play our part in enabling the objectives, set out in the Draft Climate Action Pan, that have a relevance to our members, our key stakeholders, and the county at large, to be attained.

We welcome all opportunities to collaborate on the attainment of this ambitious and comprehensive Plan.

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