

Chapter 6: Economy and Employment



Aim 7 Enterprise and Employment

To facilitate the expansion of existing industries, promote sustainable economic growth and employment opportunities.

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6.1 Economic Development

- 6.1.1 Retaining existing jobs and creating new employment opportunities are key priorities for the Council. A healthy economy contributes to the quality of life for those who live and work in the town and its environs. The Council is therefore particularly concerned that there is a range and quality of employment opportunities to meet the needs and aspirations of the local population.
- 6.1.2 Less attractive consequences of an active economy, including traffic congestion, pollution, incompatible neighbourhood development, loss of open space, noise and disturbance, are also addressed by the Plan. The Council will seek to balance the need for economic development against the overall improvement in quality of life throughout the area.

Policy ECON.1: Economic Development

It is the policy of the Council:

- a) **To facilitate the provision of adequate land for employment uses, including sites at suitable locations for industrial, enterprise, retail and other small business uses having regard to spatial planning, infrastructural, environmental and transportation requirements and compatibility with adjoining land uses;**
- b) **To support and protect the existing economic base and seek to diversify the economy through both inward investments at key growth areas within the town and the environs;**
- c) **To secure Clonmel's role as the primary location for economic growth in the South Tipperary area;**
- d) **To enhance the visitor potential, facilities and services, and economy of the town centre over an extended daytime/evening period; and**
- e) **To promote the development of tourism in Clonmel and the environs in a manner that is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the environment.**

- 6.1.3 This Policy is intended to reinforce the economic potential of Clonmel by recognising its strategic significance and concentrating employment opportunities in the town and its immediate environs. It seeks to build upon the existing employment base in conjunction with the objectives set out in the Ballingarrane LAP (2003) for the development of the Ballingarrane Science and Technology Campus.

6.2 Employment Development

- 6.2.1 It is an objective of this Plan to create an environment that is attractive for small-scale local employers as well as larger scale businesses, to consolidate and expand the local business, retail and commercial sector and to establish an interactive mix of services and employment opportunities.

Policy ECON.2: Employment Growth and Promotion

The Council will facilitate enterprise and employment by continuing to co-operate with employment creation agencies such as Enterprise Ireland, the IDA and other local agencies such as the County Development Board, County Enterprise Board, Chamber of Commerce and LEADER Groups, as well as the private sector, and will assist the work of these agencies in seeking to provide employment opportunities.

- 6.2.2 The Council will also assist the process of employment creation through the provision of sufficient zoned employment land in appropriate locations.

**Policy ECON.3:
Strategic
Employment**

The Council will reserve lands in key strategic locations that are suitable for a range of employment and economic activities. These lands will be protected from inappropriate development that would undermine their future economic development potential. Such locations include:

- a) **Ballingarrane, Clonmel**
- b) **Cashel Road, Clonmel**
- c) **Moangarriff, Clonmel**

- 6.2.3 Given the amount of undeveloped, available industrial/manufacturing land currently zoned within the Borough area and its environs, including that at the Ballingarrane Campus, the Council considers that, other than that required for the expansion of established major businesses, or the appropriate consolidation of other existing zonings, there are sufficient lands designated to facilitate anticipated industrial expansion over the term of this Plan.
- 6.2.4 The major employers in the area comprise Abbott Vascular, Boston Scientific, Bulmers, Clonmel Healthcare and others. The basis for the development of an integrated industrial cluster and range of business in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sector is identified within Clonmel. This has the potential to expand Research and Development capability and to forge links with education providers, in line with the strategy promoted for the Ballingarrane Science and Technology Campus.
- 6.2.5 Whilst the areas of zoned employment lands available are deemed to be generally sufficient, the policy is established to reflect the future needs of the major businesses, the type of uses to be incorporated within the Ballingarrane Campus, the requirements for other general industrial premises or particular local demands, and the potential for consolidation of existing industrial zonings.
- 6.2.6 At a smaller scale, demand for the following is also recognised and supported by the Council:
- Pre-established units and serviced premises for business start-up and/or for business relocation from constrained town centre sites, especially for small scale/micro-enterprises; and
 - Consolidation of industrial lands to provide/attract sites for new or expanded business opportunities.

*Abbott Vascular,
Cashel Road*



Policy ECON.4: Established Major Businesses The Council will permit expansion of industrial development around the Abbott Vascular/Boston Scientific and Bulmers operations in support of further employment generation, whilst recognising that any such development must be in keeping with and/or sensitive to local landscape character and heritage qualities.

- 6.2.7 Whereas the Council considers that adequate lands are already zoned to facilitate the future requirements of the Abbott Vascular/Boston Scientific operation within the lifetime of this Plan, it is recognised that additional lands will be required to facilitate the planned expansion of the Bulmers operation over the next 5-year period. Approximately 60 hectares of land located between the eastern town boundary and the Bulmers site is therefore zoned in this Plan for industrial purposes in order to facilitate this planned growth.
- 6.2.8 A substantial buffer of appropriate landscaping will be required along the southern boundary of Bulmers with the N24, and future development will be assessed against all other relevant policies of this Plan.

6.3 Ballingarrane

- 6.3.1 South Tipperary County Council, in partnership with the Industrial Development Authority (IDA), has established the Ballingarrane Science and Technology Campus to promote a multi-agency approach to the development of technology, education, research, enterprise and industry. The extensive 110 hectare development will include the Tipperary Institute's campus and a 20 hectare IDA business park. The campus will include state of the art infrastructure and communications services.

Policy ECON.5: Ballingarrane The Council will continue to promote the development of Ballingarrane as the premier Science and Technology Campus in South Tipperary, in accordance with the strategy set out in the Ballingarrane LAP (2003).

- 6.3.2 The campus is strategically located in Clonmel to serve both national and international markets. The Ballingarrane strategy seeks to attract high value users, overseas companies and new employment opportunities, necessary to sustain and expand Clonmel's position as a major growth centre and supporting the objective to advance its national and regional status. The Council considers it essential that the viability of the project is not compromised by dissipation of facilities across the rest of the town.

6.4 Agricultural Employment

- 6.4.1 Tipperary has traditionally had a strong rural base, with primary and secondary agriculture playing an important role in the local economy. More recently, in line with the national trend of declining agricultural employment, this has decreased in significance and the Council will seek to secure improved agricultural activity through the Plan process.

***Policy ECON.6:
Securing
Agricultural
Activity***

The Council will generally permit proposals for agricultural development where:

- a) They are appropriate in nature and scale to the area in which they are located;**
- b) The proposal is necessary for the efficient use of the agricultural holding or enterprise;**
- c) Where the proposal involves the erection of buildings, there are no suitable redundant buildings on the farm holding which would accommodate the development;**
- d) The development is not visually intrusive in the local landscape and, where the proposal is for a new building(s) and there are no suitable redundant buildings, the proposal is sited adjacent to existing buildings and suitably visually integrated in the holding; and**
- e) The proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with other policies, requirements and guidance contained in this Plan.**

- 6.4.2 This policy recognises that rural areas have a vital contribution to make to the local economy and will continue to play a key role as a building block for a strong and diversified rural economy. The Council will support and facilitate agricultural developments and improvements where they are in keeping with the character and amenity of their surroundings.

***Policy ECON.7:
Agricultural
Diversification***

The Council will generally permit development proposals for agricultural diversification in the open countryside where the proposal:

- a) Would not negatively affect public health or agricultural operation on neighbouring farms;**
- b) Is of a size and scale which is sympathetic to and which does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area; and**
- c) Demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with other policies, requirements and guidance contained in this Plan.**

- 6.4.3 Appropriate on-farm agricultural diversification can also play an important role in retaining rural communities by providing small-scale employment generating uses. This may be favourably considered by the Council where the scale and nature of the activity is appropriate to the location, sympathetic to the surrounding area and does not degrade amenity.

***Policy ECON.8:
Expansion of
Existing
Enterprises in the
Countryside***

The Council will generally permit development proposals for the expansion of existing industrial or business enterprises in the countryside where:

- a) The resultant development is of a size and scale which remains appropriate and which does not negatively impact on the character and amenity of the surrounding area; and
- b) The proposal demonstrates that it has taken into account traffic, public health, environmental and amenity considerations and is in accordance with other policies, requirements and guidance contained in this Plan.

6.4.4 Notwithstanding the overall policy of locating enterprise development in appropriately zoned lands in and adjacent to settlements, consideration will also be given to small-scale enterprises proposals in the countryside. These small-scale enterprises will generally be family owned and operated businesses and will need to satisfy traffic, public health and amenity and environmental requirements.

6.4.5 The Council also recognises that home-based employment can contribute significantly to the local economy, by allowing access to new markets, which provide new economic opportunities and encourage the spread of entrepreneurial activity and ideas. Such development proposals should be need-related and will be considered in relation to the other policies and objectives of the Plan.

***Policy ECON.9:
Home-based
Employment***

The Council will generally permit proposals for employment generating development which involve the change of use or new development for purposes of home-based employment where it can be clearly demonstrated that:

- a) The proposal is of an appropriate scale for its location; and
- b) The proposal will not give rise to adverse environmental, health and transport effects or be prejudicial to residential amenity.

6.5 Commercial Development

6.5.1 Although the majority of lands previously zoned for commercial use in the 2002 Development Plan have been taken up, there remains considerable potential for medium and large-scale developments on sites within or close to the town centre, as identified by the Clonmel Integrated Urban Strategy (2003). The Council will therefore seek the development of these lands in order to help consolidate the Central Area whilst providing for an integrated range of retail, commercial, residential, leisure, and office uses.

6.5.2 Outside the Central Area, it is recognised that Powerstown Park would benefit from increased investment in order to fulfil its function as a premiere recreational and commercial destination. Accordingly, the Council considers that the development of lands adjoining the south of the racecourse for complementary uses can be facilitated by zoning as Primarily Commercial, in conjunction with zoning of lands to the south-east as Primarily Residential (refer Chapter 3.2, Housing Proposal R.27).

***Proposal
Commerce R.27:
Powerstown Park***

Lands comprising approximately 10 hectares (gross) to the south of Powerstown Park are allocated for commercial development that is compatible with the function of the racecourse, in conjunction with zoned adjacent land to the south-east of the racecourse for residential uses.

6.5.3 A comprehensive Masterplan will be required for the Powerstown Proposal in accordance with Policy H.4 of this Plan to ensure that the two areas of zoned lands are developed in a

co-ordinated manner and fully compatible with retaining the important amenity and recreational function of the racecourse. The Masterplan will also need to consider the potential impact on the existing road network, through the submission of a Transport Assessment as prescribed in Chapter 7.9 of the Plan.

- 6.5.4 While it is the policy of the Council to encourage industrial, commercial, and service activities within the built-up area, there are opportunities for the development of acceptable enterprises that support and enhance rural communities. Such activities should not be allowed at the expense of quality of life or the environment.
- 6.5.5 The Council recognises that certain commercial activities can be accommodated in the rural area adjacent to residential areas, particularly those that contribute to local service provision. However, there is a growing trend of industrial and commercial activity locating in the open countryside. Such activities can be divided into the following two categories:
1. Small to medium sized units, often self-employed and small scale, that comprise of workshops and storage units, for example, joinery, welding shops, metal fabrication, car parking for articulated trucks, etc.
 2. Medium to large-scale units that include; concrete manufacturing plants, warehousing and industrial plants.

***Policy ECON.10:
Commercial Uses
in the Open
Countryside***

The Council will resist commercial and industrial development in the open countryside, which would be inappropriate by virtue of size, scale, and hours of operation, traffic congestion or nature of use. The Council will resist proposals for commercial / industrial activity in the Countryside except where:

- (a) there is a proven reason for the proposal to be sited in the open countryside;**
- (b) the proposed building / site works do not detract from the rural character of the landscape;**
- (c) the proposal is compatible with the neighbouring landuses; and**
- (d) the proposal does not impact on traffic safety.**

- 6.5.6 These types of activities can have a detrimental impact on amenities of adjacent residents, viability of agricultural and equine activities, traffic safety on surrounding rural roads, and cause detrimental harm to the rural character of the area. The Council will therefore seek to balance the need to provide for rural diversification against the impact that such proposals would have on existing agricultural viability, amenities, road safety and the rural character of the area.
- 6.5.7 General policy is established to develop and maintain a quality commercial environment in all locations.

***Policy ECON.11:
Environmental
Improvement of
Employment Areas***

The Council will seek to improve the environment of the employment/commercial areas of the Plan area through one or more of the following:

- a) Ensuring that new commercial developments provide a visually interesting street and/or road frontage where appropriate;**
- b) Associated streetscape improvement within the town centre;**
- c) Comprehensive landscaping/screening where employment development adjoins other uses;**
- d) Improved access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with disabilities; and**
- e) Retention and enhancement of Protected Structures, Areas of Archaeological Interest or Architectural Conservation Areas.**

6.6 Retail Development

- 6.6.1 Clonmel accounts for over half the retail floorspace in South Tipperary (approximately 31,550m², as calculated in 2002 for the South Tipperary County Retail Strategy 2003) and the town centre offers a vibrant retail core that ensures a sense of place and distinctive identity. In addition to shopping facilities, the Central Area offers a good range of services, tourist and leisure facilities.
- 6.6.2 The Council recognises, however, that further improvement in town centre facilities is required in order for Clonmel to realise its full potential as a regional shopping destination. Whilst retail vacancy levels are low, there is a deficiency of high quality convenience and comparison operators. To be more attractive to shoppers and visitors, the town centre needs to strengthen the pattern of uses and facilities available over an extended day time period, and to establish a more vibrant evening economy.
- 6.6.3 Proposals for new retail and/or commercial development, or the extension and improvement of existing retail or commercial premises, within the Central Area (refer Chapter 4.1, Figure 4), will be encouraged. The change of use of existing retail and/or commercial premises to non-commercial uses at ground floor level will be resisted where this would detrimentally affect, either individually or cumulatively with other proposals, the liveliness, character or amenity of the existing central area. Elsewhere within the town centre a wider range of uses will be encouraged to support the viability of Clonmel.
- 6.6.4 The 'Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (2005) set out the Government's policy objectives in respect of retail development. This document states that the Local Authority will adopt a pro-active role in enhancing the vitality and viability of their centre(s) and, consequently, specific objectives are needed for the following issues:
- Ensuring suitable modern retail facilities in the town centre;
 - Policy controlling out-of-town retail in the environs of urban centres; and
 - Provision of adequate zoned lands for retail warehousing.

Policy ECON.12: Retail Provision

The Council will seek to improve and strengthen retail provision through the development of a wider range of town centre shopping facilities and lower order comparison goods, and in particular specialist outlets in the Central Area, in order to reduce leakage to other towns and to promote Clonmel as the principal retail centre for the County.

- 6.6.5 Whilst major convenience shopping and retail warehousing provision may be located on the edge of the Central Area to avail of more expansive/less sensitive sites, or in outlying areas to satisfy local convenience needs, it is essential that any such provision does not detract from the viability of the town centre. The location of comparison retail will generally be confined to the Central Area, where the provision of smaller scale convenience shops, supermarkets and metro stores will be encouraged, supported by combination of on/off-street public parking facilities.

Policy ECON.13: Out of Central Area Retail Facilities

Large out-of-town centre retail development will generally be restricted in the interest of protecting the retail vitality of the Central Area.

- 6.6.6 The Council will apply a sequential location test in assessing the suitability of all sites for retail development. The preferred location for new development, where practicable and

viable, will therefore be within the identified Central Area sites. If these are not readily available within a reasonable and realistic development timescale, then edge-of-centre sites may be considered by the Council (i.e. sites that are within 300–400 metres of the centre), but only after all of the options for Central Area locations are exhausted.

- 6.6.7 In the assessment of planning applications for retail developments that represent large-scale additions to the existing retail capacity in out-of-town centre locations, the onus will be on the applicant to demonstrate compliance with the Development Plan. Generally, in the consideration of planning applications for such retail development, the Council will require:
- The proposal, either by itself, or cumulatively with other proposals, which will not have a significant detrimental impact on the vitality and viability of the town centre;
 - The application will not have a negative impact on the existing uses of the surrounding lands by reason of noise, smell or visual impact;
 - The development will be easily accessed from a main road, with adequate parking facilities and minimal adverse impact on road safety; and
 - Where appropriate, the applicant will need to demonstrate compliance with the County Retail Strategy (2003), and any variation, amendment or subsequent review adopted by the Council.

Retail Warehousing Facilities

- 6.6.8 Retail warehousing is defined as large, generally single-level stores specialising in the sale of bulky household goods, such as carpets, furniture, electrical appliances, and DIY items, catering mostly for car-borne customers. They are usually located on edge and/or out-of-centre sites.
- 6.6.9 Retail warehousing may also be considered in areas zoned for industrial development where retailing activity will play a secondary role to the primary use and will not restrict the future development of industrial facilities in the area.

Policy ECON.14: Retail Warehousing

Proposals for the development of retail warehousing facilities may be considered in areas zoned for either commercial or industrial use where it can be demonstrated that they can be both adequately accommodated in terms of the character of the site and, most importantly, that they will not detract from the retail viability and vitality of the town centre retail core. All proposals for retail warehousing developments will be assessed having regard to the 'Retail Planning – Guidelines for Planning Authorities', DoEHLG, 2005.

Retail and Townscape Character

- 6.6.10 The prime retail areas are centred on O'Connell Street, Gladstone Street, Mitchell Street and the Market Place Shopping Centre. Within this Central Area, provision for improved shopping facilities will be required to help meet the needs and aspirations of the local community and visitors. This must be achieved whilst improving the shopping environment in accordance with the Town Centre Strategy, as set out in Chapter 4.1 of this Plan.
- 6.6.11 Retail uses and related development that compromises the townscape character or amenity of the town centre will be strongly resisted.
- 6.6.12 The traditional shop fronts of Clonmel are important to the retail attraction of the town, and contribute considerably to its distinctiveness as an urban destination. The Council will

encourage the retention of shop fronts of quality and promote the repair of traditional shop fronts. This will not preclude proposals which are contemporary in design, provided that such proposals do not have a negative impact on the surrounding townscape, and designs are sympathetic to the surrounding materials, building line and bulk of the proposed building.

**Policy ECON.15:
Traditional Shop
Fronts**

It is the policy of the Council to encourage the retention of traditional shop fronts of high quality. The replacement or repair of shop fronts will be carried out in accordance with standards set out in Chapter 9, Development Management.

Petrol Filling Stations

- 6.6.13 It is recognised that the traditional role of filling stations is expanding to include the provision of general convenience retail and often delicatessen/off-licence facilities, to serve urban, suburban village and sometimes rural locations. In suitable locations, the retail floorspace associated with petrol filling stations shall be capped at 400 sq.m. The Council will discourage new filling stations outside speed limits, and in all cases will have regard to the provisions of the Retail Planning Guidelines.

**Policy ECON.16:
Petrol Filling
Stations**

The Council will resist new filling stations or redevelopments of existing filling stations that increase the intensity of uses, except where they can meet the following criteria:

- a) **The proposal is within a settlement boundary or the 50 kph speed limit where none exists;**
- b) **It is in accordance with the zoning requirement for the area;**
- c) **The floor space of the retail unit does not detract from the viability of the town centre;**
- d) **The siting and layout design is in accordance with the standards set out in Chapters 8 and 9 of the Plan.**

Advertising

- 6.6.14 Certain types of advertisements can cause particular harm to the appearance of buildings and the street scene, and the Council will therefore discourage free-standing advertisements on forecourts; signs or advertisements above fascia level; the location of more than one projecting sign per shop unit; or the provision of poster boards.

**Policy ECON.17:
Advertising**

The Council will resist advertising if:

- a) **By reason of size, siting, design, materials or illumination it would harm the appearance of a building or the character of the town centre; or**
- b) **It would adversely affect public safety.**

Take-Away Outlets

- 6.6.15 'Take-aways' tend to generate noise, odour and litter, and can cause disturbance to nearby residents, particularly late at night. In considering applications for new take-away food outlets, the Council will have regard to the need to preserve the amenities and the character of the area as set out in Chapter 9 Development Management (9.5.11).

Policy ECON.18: *Take-aways* **The Council will generally resist further development of take-away food outlets in order to preserve the amenity and character of the town and residential areas.**

6.7 Tourism

6.7.1 Tourism is recognised as a growing and highly important sector within the national economy, and domestic tourism is becoming increasingly important due to greater disposable income levels. The trend is reflected by the significantly increased number of visitors to Clonmel during recent years, also due in part to the improvement in the appearance of the town and the enhanced quality and quantity of tourist accommodation.

Policy ECON.19: *Visitor Provision* **The Council will continue to encourage investment in Clonmel and its environs by way of additional tourist accommodation and other facilities such as restaurants and craft shops.**

Policy ECON.20: *Co-operation between Tourist Bodies and Associated Agencies* **The Council will continue to co-operate with statutory bodies and other agencies involved in tourism, to support their activities and to promote partnership and exchange of information between these agencies, in order to encourage the development of tourism in the Clonmel and environs area where it is compatible with the conservation and enhancement of the environment.**

6.7.2 The Council recognises that there is a major opportunity to further develop the tourist profile through the promotion of Clonmel as an attractive market town rich in heritage, for its proximity to the Comeragh Mountains, its location on the River Suir, for its wealth of historic buildings, and as an attractive centre for visiting the wider South-East Region. The proximity of the town to the Comeragh foothills also presents opportunities for trekking and walking tours, while the River Suir, as one of Ireland's premier trout rivers, could be more actively promoted as a major angling attraction.

Policy ECON.21: *Tourist Facilities and Accommodation* **The Council will seek to facilitate new development for the tourist sector where they can best support the provision of services and the general economic vitality of the area, provided that such development:**

- a) **Is sited in or adjacent to a tourist destination;**
- b) **Protects and enhances the amenities of the area; and**
- c) **Is compatible with the relevant existing land uses in nature and extent.**

6.7.3 This policy is intended to protect the natural, built or cultural heritage features that form the basis of local attractions from adverse impacts of tourist development. In particular, new facilities will not be detrimental to environmentally sensitive areas, such as Natural Heritage Areas, Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas or any other national, EU or international designations.

***Policy ECON.22:
The Town Centre
as a Tourist
Destination*** The Council will facilitate the improvement of tourist facilities in the town centre, encourage the enhancement of hotel and accommodation facilities, and the availability and provision of improved food and drink establishments, as well as the establishment of visitor trails and information related to the town and its heritage/landscape attributes and surroundings.

6.7.4 Measures to actively encourage the development of tourist related uses in the town will be pursued by the Council, including increased and improved bed spaces and accommodation, leisure, amenity and conference facilities, and as a visitor base/gateway to the natural, built and cultural environment of the wider area, providing access to the combination of hill walking, fishing, cycle ways, places of interest and local villages.

6.7.5 The Council will actively pursue the following tourism objectives as resources permit:

***Proposal T.1:
Bulmers Old
Brewery*** Encourage the development of a visitor's facility in the Bulmers Town Centre site at the old brewery.

***Proposal T.2: Suir
River Corridor*** Pursue the provision of amenity and recreational facilities (refer Chapter 5.5).

***Proposal T.3:
Marketing*** Further develop promotional information for the town through improved literature and web site presence.

***Proposal T.4:
European Links*** Further develop strategic policy for the promotion of Clonmel through its 'Twin Towns' in Italy, France, Austria and England, and through school exchange programmes, hosting of international conferences and events.

***Proposal T.5:
Signage*** Rationalise and improve tourism directional signage within the town, and directional signs on National Primary Routes from other urban centres.

***Proposal T.6:
Events*** Promote the development of major attractions and events in the town that can encourage large numbers of visitors.