Reversing our population decline:

A Strategic Framework to examine and understand the challenges, and identify and resource the solutions.

Our four initiating questions are:

2. What do our targets need to be as we address population decline?

4. What risks do we need to be aware of and manage, or avoid, as we strive towards our targets?

3. What do we need to fully understand and harness as we work towards our targets?

1. What is driving population decline, and what do we need to consider as we work to reverse it?

These strategic questions have their own subquestions. The solutions we come up with need to address these. We will prioritise solutions that provide a real response to a large part of these questions.

1. What is driving population decline, and what do we need to consider as we work to reverse it?

1	There has been a decline in population in the last 30years - what caused this?	1
2	To what extent is lack of opportunity for Younger people a cause for depopulation?	1
3	Did the majority of people enjoyed living in Loophead during Covid? And why or why not?	1
4	What is the need for different amenities in the area, youthclubs, keeping younger people engage? And what can we do to develop this?	1
5	Do we need to improve road infrastructure? Where? With what target? To what level?	1
6	How can we develop housing in Carrigaholt village (and others) with an alternative sewage treatment?	1
7	What FETAC/vocational training would be most appropriate and most useful to the area?	1
8	What alternative training systems should we consider to help our community members thrive?	1
9	What caused the lack of job security in the area?	1
10	What are our current housing needs?	1
11	What are the age group demographics for those population sectors that have dropped?	1
12	Maybe the Tourist business is as a result of de-population?	1
13	Does tourism only benefit a small population? What are the numbers?	1
14	What is the age demographic of population in Loop Head that has declined and what is the impact of this now and in the future?	1
15	Are we using our rich natural resources to provide a more holistic tourist experience so that when they leave the area they have a better understanding of the natural world and their place in it.	1
16	What lessons can be learned from tourist accommodation along the West Coast that can be implemented before any further developments in areas like Carrigaholt.	1
17	Numbers working in farming have declined significantly. What can we do to increase numbers of people working on the land?	1
18	What other types of employment can be identified to create more diverse range of employment opportunities in the area.	1
19	What role has a vibrant cultural scene to play in keeping young people in the area?	1
20	What questions do we need to ask to put a plan together to reverse population decline?	1
21	When can we expect reliable broadband?	1
22	What can we do to support seasonal extension for tourism?	1
23	How do we attract apprenticeships into the area?	1
24	How do we get Ftec/ Vocational training appropriate to the needs of the area?	1
25	How do we challenge local authority to get tax incentives for home buyers?	1
26	What new industries can we attract to give local employment?	1
27	How do we create affordable housing?	1
28	How can we influence county engineers to improve the quality of our roads?	1
29	Why has there been no diversification to create jobs outside tourism and agriculture? Can we make use of the natural amenities such as seawed to create more employment?	1
30	Why do we allow 3rd level education to encourage the young to leave the peninsula?	1
31	Can we influence the influence of second home owners that are driving away local population through lack of affordable housing?	1
32	Why is there such little investment into services on the Loop Head Peninsula?	1
33	Why is there so little business investment outside seasonal tourism?	1
34	What do we need to do to achieve and deliver great remote working offering with flexible options, across the peninsula ?	1
35	Where do we sit on the National Broadband plan?	1
36	Do we speak to developers about coming into the Loop Head area? Can we guarantee buyers?	1

37	How can we facilitate (incentivise) micro industries to relocate or set up here? - i.e. can we create hubs for industry?	1
38	Why are our young people leaving?	1
39	How do we improve the socia situation for young people?	1
40	How do we increase employment opportunities?	1
41	How do we add further educational and training opportunities?	1
42	Our young people have left for college etc - what would need to be here to entice them to return?	1
43	Their peers are not here - what would make it cool to live here?	1
44	Is there an over-reliance on tourism?	1
45	When are we getting our primary care centre in kilrush - as important as housing and jobs - to paint the story that we have it all?	1
46	how to get into the schools to hear the young people - how to engage the kids? (maybe use post it notes to involve them and get their thoughts ?)	1
47	Should we focus on small businesses and micro industries in terms of remote working ?	1
48	Why are people leaving - why dont they come back after 3rd level?	1
49	How do we create a more vibrant, social, active community that would be an attractive place to move to?	1
50	What unique qualities are part of living in Loop Head?	1
51	Identify reasons other than employment that people may choose not to live here - social aspects?	1
52	Covid-19 has made people consider their quality of life in a holistic way - what does Loop Head offer that may mean that people are perhaps willing to work for less money to live in a place like this for better life quality?	1
53	Do we need to focus more on communicating the benefits of living here to a younger age group?	1
54	Is it particularly difficult for women to establish themselves in Loop Head with less opportunities to socialise, and if so, how can we address this?	1
55	Those who are living in the satellite towns of the cities are maybe getting the best of both worlds - are we too far away from services to appeal to these?	1
56	There are options in terms of having a base here and spending a few days a week working in the city - people are already doing this and returning to their base in Clare - is this enough to contribute to community and population growth?	1
57	When we were all locked down due to Covid in our own areas what did people feel or miss? Was it the the ability to work and simultaneously connect with your community around you?	1
58	If we generate a buzz about being here and living here with lots going on will that capture the imagination of people who may then want to live here?	1
59	How do we support and facilitate remote working?	1
60	Is part of the issue here that a lot of what is going on here is for tourists rather than initiatives for the resident population? Do we need to consider what goes on for people based here after the tourist season?	1
61	What gaps in our infrastructure (eg. housing, health) are acting as a disincentive to moving here?	1
62	We need to be honest and have the issues on the table to address and identify them - initiatives thus far have been focused on tourism so this Loop Head Together initiative is great because it focuses on making this a great place to live - how can they be complimentary?	1
63	Can we identify and respond to the reasons that young people leave here and do not return to	1
64	Are we as welcoming to newcomers, particularly non-nationals, as we should be or are we settled into our own groove? As more people are encouraged to move here is the onus on the locals to reach out and make people feel welcome?	1
65	Do we listen and involve our young people enough in discussions and plans for the area and our communities? Do we need to actively encourage their participation?	1

66	Why do young people have to leave to study?	1
67	Is Covid-19 presenting an opportunity?	1
68	Is the elderly population base contributing to the erosion of the sense of community as there seems to be a wave of funerals rather than births or weddings?	1
69	Where you dont have a balance in age groups, does it contribute to a loss of sense of vibrancy?	1
70	Are school closures indicating a loss of community?	1
71	How do you make a living here?	1
72	Is it simply the distance from the nearest large service town (Ennis) that is putting people off living here?	1
73	Is there a perception that it is just too quiet "back west"?	1
74	Is there a perception that "back west" is just a little too far away from everything?	1
75	What are the top three core industry paths that young people are choosing now?	1
76	Do we need to consider the social aspect of life on the loop for younger people?	1
77	Why have people left the peninsula, how can we find this out - was job the only reason , anything else?	1
78	How can we improve local facilities to attract people to the area (e.g. schools, parks, playgrounds, digital hubs, beach access)	1
79	How can we harness the Skills & Knowledge on the Loop to attract businesses / investment inward while also allowing us to sell services outwards?	1
80	what is unique about living in West Clare	1
81	What is the experience of living in West Clare (e.g feelings, emotions, what draws you back)	1
82	What/do we need to do to change our Image on the Loop???	1
83	Have we got an adequate Health infrastructure in place to support an increased population? If not, what would an adequate one look like?	1
84	What do we envision the new sources of employment / income for people living on the Loop to be?	1
85	What diverse employment opportunities should we explore?	1

2. What do our targets need to be as we address population decline?

86	What will our housing needs look like if we aim to achieve the goals of the Loop Head together initiative?	2
87	What is a sustainable population for Loop Head Penninsula?	2
88	So what do we need to do to create other types of employment? And how many do we need for the Loop Head area to thrive?	2
89	60% of housing units in 2016 were unocuppied, so is the last thing we need on Loop Head more houses?	2
90	What is a sustainable population mix for Loop Head to survive – age, work profile, etc	2
91	Can we quantify the tangible benefits of tourism for the area and how it can be sustainable and nurture growth in local areas; balanced growth.	2
92	Would increasing incentives for people working and living locally have an impact on tourist accommodation?	2
93	What would balanced development look like for local people, tourists and local environment	2
94	What would a good day or week look like for a young person in their 20's who wants to live and work from Loop Head	2
95	What are the key aspects a young family want to be able to attract them to stay and work in the area?	2
96	How many people should we be aiming to have? What focus on infrastructure would be required to make that more realistic?	2
97	Truely - what can we tangibly deliver or expect from this development plan?	2

98	What are the metrics or KPI's that we should be using?	2
99	i.e. what does success look like in this initiative?	2
100	What would need to happen to bring further eduction to the peninsula? How many people would we need to make it viable?	2
101	Exactly what demographic are we targetting?	2
102	Do we know how many cars a day are too many on the roads?	2
103	How much is too much? (for roads, traffic wise etc) - tourism question perhaps	2
104	What else can the council do to incentivise young people to live here ?	2
105	Should we identify a particular demographic that we are trying to attract to the area (eg. retirees/ young families)?	2
106	Should we aim to attract more retirees?	2
107	Do we need to include within the plan employment opportunities, housing, healthcare in the plan?	2
108	What demographic age groups should LDP target that might help curb depopulation on the peninsula?	2
109	What is the vision for living on the Loop for next 20 years (note - should not have to explain)	2

3. What do we need to fully understand and harness as we work towards our targets?

110	How do we attract remote jobs? How do we attract people that want to work here?	3
111	How do we create jobs?	3
112	What light industrial developments could be undertaken here to attract jobs and remote jobs?	3
113	How can we attract or self-incubate these light industries?	3
114	Why would remote working be very positive for Loophead?	3
115	When can we expect reliable broadband to be? And how can be ensure this is provided?	3
116	What funding is available for infrastructure? What infrastructure is needed?	3
117	What do we need to do to ensure Digital Infrastructure is at the level we need (minimum broadband quality, digital marketing and other trainings needed) delivers as being the very first thing to happen for anything to improve remote working?	3
118	How do we extend the tourist season on the peninsula? What would our target be?	3
119	How can we improve services to our front door? How can this happen? What services are required? How can this contribute to population stabilisation?	3
120	Do we need more road / cycleway/ footpaths/ railways/ waterways to invigurate the interconection with and within the Peninsula?	3
121	What is the minimum internet speed we need from our providers and how can we ensure this becomes the reality?	3
122	How could apprenticeships contribute and what apprenticiships could we support?	3
123	Should there be tax incentives for house buyers? Why? With what aim? How much? How can we use section 48?	3
124	How to create a place for all who want to live here? Their connectivity/sustainably ?	3
125	Can loophead provide quantitative success for everyone?	3
126	How to achieve security for people in a sense of employment which will influence population demograph ?	3
127	What job opportunities could we create if we were to pool our needs? E.g. a social enterprise for housekeeping, elderly care, gardening, etc	3
128	Can attracting tourism help develop parallel industry opportunities?	3
129	How to achieve employment security for people which will influence population demograph?	3
130	STEM (Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) education integration into west clare through schooling primary and secondary teaching, will it help improve our area?	3

131	Farming, is more industrial now . . . so are we designing out employment in farming? And could we do this differently in a way good for all involved?	3
132	Can we have tax incentives that will support people to live and work locally in Kilkee and on Loop Head? Tax incentive schemes for holiday homes resulted in many holiday homes being build but also many locals being priced out of the market and displaced.	3
133	How can tourists who love Loop Head be encouraged to contribute to community growth and development? What are the mutual benefits that sustain us both?	3
134	How can we ensure that we have enough skilled staff for service sector in the area?	3
135	How can we facilitate remote study for 3rd level students? Can we encourage facilities to tie in with universities/colleges	3
136	How can we change the mindset of our young people to believe that Loop Head can be a vibrant place to live and enjoy? Can we develope LoopHead as a more virant lifestyle for lifestyle for younger people?	3
137	How can we make the most of our resources to promote sustainable jobs in Loophead? Can we encourage a more apprenticeship based enviroment?	3
138	How can we market what's best about Loophead to the people we would like to come to live	3
139	How can we work towards a transport infrastructure that supports people movement	3
140	How to make the area attractive to young people. How can we promote LoopHead and everything that is good about it more in school?	3
141	How do we get fibre to door in every house in west clare? what has to happen to achieve this?	3
142	How do we incentivise people to bring old disused commercial premises back into use (i.e.lighthouse inn)?	3
143	How can we ensure a primary care centre in Kilrush?	3
144	How can we utilise accommodation in Kilrush and Kilkee thats not in use? How can we incentivise landlords to bring these back into use?	3
145	Start up hub for new businesses - can we attract start up businesses and how?? (this is not just about office hot desks but about actual support hubs where spaces can be rented on a longer term)?	3
146	How do we tackle the housing issue? How do we approach a housing audit?	3
147	Should we have a boarding school or an educational hub out here?	3
148	How do we suitably market that loop head already has an amazing education option for primary level children?	3
149	How can we tie in with progressive teachers and children and parents to market the current offering on Loop Head?	3
150	We are not the only periphery place in europe and maybe there are learnings from other places that could be applied? How have they dealt with population decline?	3
151	Is there a discussion to be had around tax breaks?	3
152	What can we do to improve employment opportunities for those young people who would love to return?	3
153	How do we need to have our voices heard on the planning situation for young couples - particularly those who want to build on their own land?	3
154	What methods can we put in place to farmers, young and old, on diversification in agriculture - e.g. sea salt production, seaweed harvesting, farm drop, odd box, slow food, Loop Head farm to fork…	3
155	Do we need to look at other counties & countries and how they have handled their depopulation?	3
156	Right now, how do we engage the young people in this initiative because the future of loop head is with our young people?	3
157	Is there any way we can get some figures of people who are now NOT going to be returning to their offices in dublin - limerick?	3
158	What support network can we put in place to help young families who choose to live here?	3

159	How do we identify our key strengths - our unique perspective?	3
160	How do we create employment opportunities?	3
161	Should we look at the potential of attracting remote workers particularly as more people are being encouraged into STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics) based careers?	3
162	How do we deal with a perception that we are too distant from services?	3
163	How do we engage with the young group who can no longer go abroad, emigrate - this current climate prevents that travel so we need to ask how we engage them?	3
164	How do we make people feel more welcome?	3
165	What opportunities is Covid-19 presenting for our area?	3
166	How do we make people feel more welcome?	3
167	Some Dublin schools have a 'Friendship Day' - is this something we should do in our schools and also even for adults? A community day - meet and greet, bbq, community walks?	3
168	When young people leave they fall into a new life, what would make them think about returning?	3
169	How do we make this a place where people would think about setting down roots? (After, for e.g., sowing their wild oats)	3
170	How do we create the potential for more job opportunities, and more diverse job opportunities?	3
171	Should we have a social element aimed at women to enable women to get together and meet up particularly when they are new to the area?	3
172	How do we promote West Clare as a great place to live (e.g. employment opportunities, facilities, social & sporting supports etc..)?	3
173	How can we best help with information for people to relocate to West Clare?	3
174	How can we better facilitate Remote Working on the Loop?	3
175	What infrastructure and services are required to enable remote working?	3
176	How can we attract retired folk from other counties and internationally	3
177	How can we make loop head attractive for retired people to locate permanently (active retirement)	3

4. What risks do we need to be aware of and manage, or avoid, as we strive towards our targets?

178	There is a lack of transport infrastructure, so how to make the area attractive to young people?	4
179	How to we ensure that by developing the Loop Head area we do not create a situation where local families cannot aford housing?	4
180	If we are dependant on Tourism, we need places for tourists to stay, if we increase the local population surely that will make accomodation for tourists more expensive?	4
181	How can we enhance a sense of community in areas where a transient tourist population outnumbers numbers locals?	4
182	Is it more difficult for women to get together here? If it is, now do we address this risk?	4