

Appendix One

Planning and Socio-economic Review

Appendix One: PLANNING AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC REVIEW

An analysis of local, regional and national policy was carried out to establish the social, economic and development activity in the canal corridor. Workshops were held with stakeholders in Tullamore and subsequently with local groups in Clonfert. Public advertisements were placed and submissions invited and a traveling exhibition prepared for use in both East Galway and the Offaly corridor. An examination of current development trends in the corridor was also carried out with the assistance of Galway and Offaly County Council Planning Departments.

The following paper sets out the main issues and findings including an audit of local accommodation and existing and “potential” tourist facilities.

POLICY BACKGROUND

From a planning perspective, however strong and unique local identity, cultural and physical development of the Study Area all future social, economic and physical development must be considered in the context of a hierarchy of policy advice at the European, national, regional and local level.

The relevant documents which must be considered in any assessment of the well being and future development of the Study Area are as follows.

European Policy European Spatial Development Perspective

Aims: To promote development in the European Union in a more holistic fashion widening the development focus away from purely sectoral issues to provide for the overall spread of development and the potential taking advantage of development opportunities that arise in the various European Regions.

Relevance to the Study Area: The core of the ESDP is the promotion of development based on the balance between society, economy and environment which reflects the fundamental goals of European policy namely economic and social cohesion, conservation of natural resources and cultural heritage, and a more balanced competitiveness throughout Europe.

The Cork Declaration: A Living Countryside

Aims: To press home the point that rural development must address all socio-economic sectors in the countryside and not just those related to farming. More attention must be paid to quality of life (ie.) health, safety, personal development and leisure.

Relevance to Study Area: The declaration’s ten point rural development programme is particularly relevant to the Study Area as it seeks to promote local

capacity building for sustainable development in rural areas based on private and community based initiatives that are well integrated into global markets.

The ten points are as follows:

- (1) **Rural Preference** - a fairer balance of public spending between urban and rural areas fostering a growing share of available resources for promoting rural development and securing environmental objectives.
- (2) **An Integrated Approach**- multi-disciplinary in concept, multi-sectoral in application applying to all areas in the EU. Requirement for agricultural adjustment and development, economic diversification – notably small/medium scale industries, rural services, management of natural resources, enhancement of environmental functions and promotion of culture, tourism and recreation.
- (3) Diversification – of economic and social activity. Devising a framework for self-sustaining private and community-based initiatives. Advocates strengthening the role of small towns and promoting the development of viable rural communities and renewal of villages.
- (4) Sustainability – promoting rural development which sustains the quality and amenity of Europe’s rural landscapes.
- (5) Subsidiarity - based on partnership and co-operation at local, regional, national and European levels. Encouraging participation through a “bottom up” approach harnessing creativity and solidarity.
- (6) Simplification – this involves radical simplification in legislation, more subsidiarity in decisions and decentralisation of policy implementation.
- (7) Programming – suggests procedures for integrating one sole rural development programme for each region ensuring a single mechanism for sustainable and rural development.
- (8) Finance – utilising local resources to promote local rural development projects to diversify rural economies.
- (9) Management – seeking effectiveness of regional and local governments and community groups. Foster exchange of experience through networking between regions and between rural communities throughout Europe.
- (10) Evaluation and Research - ensuring transparency of procedures. Guarantee the good use of public money. Ensure stakeholders are consulted in the design and implementation processes as well as in monitoring and evaluation.

Local Authorities and Sustainable Development Guidelines on Local Agenda 21

Aims: This is a blueprint as to how sustainable development may be promoted.

Relevance to the Study Area: The principles of sustainable development should inform policies, objectives and proposals put forward in this strategy. In this

context initiatives, jobs, proposals, means of transport, developments, environmental improvements should be sustainable.

National Development Plan 2000-2006

Aims: The National Development Plan 2000-2006 divides the Country into two separate regions for structural funding purposes. The midlands and western part of the country within which the Study Area is located has retained Objective 1 status for structural funds for the period to 2006. _

Relevance to the Study Area: There are several key issues raised in the National Development Plan which are of relevance to the Study Area. These include recognition of the imbalance between the regions in the distribution of national economic progress. There is an acknowledgement of the growing importance of the relationship between economic and social planning, physical planning and land-use policies.

Total expenditure on Economic and Social infrastructure development will be over £17 billion to be spent on public infrastructure (i.e.) roads, public transport, water services, environmental protection, energy, housing and health capital.

Of particular relevance to the Study Area is the Inter Regional Programme, which allocates funds for infrastructural investment to include non-national roads, rural water, waster management, urban and village renewal, e-commerce, seaports, regional airports and finally culture, recreation and sports. In the productive sector there will be investment in micro enterprises, tourism, fisheries, forestry and rural development.

The plan also seeks to promote social cohesion. Support for community development, which enhances the capacity of disadvantaged local communities to participate in mainstream development, is an integral part of the Government's overall social and economic development strategy.

Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland

Aims: This document provides guidance on sustainable development in Ireland.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Strategy defines sustainable development as an acceptable quality of life for present and future generations recognising that the actions of the present affect the inheritance of future generations. The concept of sustainability indicates that development must be within the capacity of the environment to support it without suffering lasting damage or depletion.

Government White Paper on Rural development – Ensuring the Future: A Strategy for Rural Development in Ireland.

Aims: The aim is to set out a vision and framework for the development of rural communities in Ireland into the next Millennium. The aim is to provide for vibrant sustainable communities with a range of age, income and occupational groups so as to allow them to adapt to on-going economic, social, cultural and environmental change and to enjoy a standard of living and quality of life which will make them attractive communities in which to live and work. Other aims achievable through this vision include sufficient income and employment opportunities to allow individuals and families to live with dignity; rural communities should enjoy access to education, training and lifelong learning and to adequate levels of social and other services and infrastructures; rural communities will participate effectively in the structures and decision making processes affecting them in an inclusive society based on the principles of equity, particularly in relation to gender balance and social justice; the cultural identity of rural communities, in particular the language, traditions, heritage and sense of community will be valued and retained; and finally, the rural environment will be respected and development in rural areas will take place in a sustainable manner. The overall strategy for rural development includes a dedicated focus on rural development policy through appropriate institutional mechanisms, in particular a “lead” Department; a regional approach to development, service and infrastructure provision; sustainable economic development; human resources development; and, a determined focus on poverty and social exclusion.

Relevance to the Study Area: The White Paper restates the Government’s commitment to regional planning; providing necessary infrastructure and essential public services to ensure a proper environment for economic development, ensuring the necessary physical and telecommunications infrastructure is provided; that local transport service needs are met; that housing in rural areas will be integrated with services and infrastructure provision; and that the necessary childcare and health care facilities are provided.

Of particular relevance to the Study Area is the commitment in the White Paper to the Government ensuring that economic and social development will be pursued on the basis of respect for the heritage of rural areas, including the Irish language. Support will be provided for development projects which will allow increased access and participation in arts and cultural activities for rural communities, not only for the purposes of enriching the quality of life and cultural identity of rural communities, but also as contributors to economic development.

REGIONAL POLICY GUIDANCE

Border, Midland and Western Region Development Strategy 2000-2006

Aims: This Strategy identifies strengths and weaknesses of the Region including lack of highly skilled personnel, varied quality of infrastructure, high quality natural environment, both land and coastal, high endowment of natural resources and low urban structure._

Relevance to the Study Area: The Strategy recommends an integrated package of investment advocating new urban growth centres. It advocates an investment proposal comprising an increased share for the Region in National Development Plan funding in the 2000-2006 period involving a total of £7.7 billion; a substantial rise in the absolute level of investment across all sectors; re-prioritisation of investment in percentage share terms particularly towards infrastructure._

The “integrated package” approach will require innovative planning and delivery mechanisms. Greater integration between traditionally separate strands of physical and economic planning between the top-down and bottom-up planning approaches and between planning for urban centres and rural areas affected by these centres is required.

The West Regional Report 2000-2006

Aims: The overall aim of this Report is to implement a people focussed vision for the Region’s communities and it’s quality of life. The Plan seeks to retain rural communities through a strategy of balanced regional development building upon its comparative advantages and strengths.

Relevance to the Study Area: A portion of the Study Area is situated within the western region and a number of the strategic issues facing the Region also exist in this edge. These include tackling problems of decline and lack of development in rural areas and promoting sustainable development that meets the needs of people living in the west.

Shannon Development

The role of Shannon Development (SD) is to promote the industrial, tourism and rural development of the Shannon region including that section of the Shannon and West Offaly between Shannonbridge and Meelick. As part of the consultation process, SD made a submission to the project which was subsequently followed up by a meeting. A copy of the submission is enclosed in this report .

SD have developed a project “E3” which involves the concept of 21st century models of village / rural development based on distance working. I.e. internet

based workspace / offices in a town courtyard environment of approximately 3 acres with associated living accommodation to facilitate easy movement of potential clients / residents from the cities to a village environment.

To date three sites have been identified of which Banagher, Co. Offaly., is one. Indeed Banagher has the most potential as the proposed site – Fort Falkland and environs – provides an ideal waterside / heritage environment and a draft sketch design has been produced.

Alongside the conversion of the mill buildings possibly as a public / private partnership there are current planning applications for two further marinas in Banagher.

SD are concerned that the corridor study may recommend further “restrictions” in the area which may be contrary to the aims of the E3 project or other initiatives locally – the current SPAs and SPCs create ambiguities at the edges / boundaries of urban areas however SD wish to see development and economic activity in the Shannon corridor to the highest environmental standards.

By and large the aims and objectives and stated policies of Shannon Development compliment the corridor study. Other projects envisaged by SD include a creative glass center for Belmont and the general promotion of Ferbane.

LOCAL POLICY

Offaly County Development Plan 1996

Aims: The County Development Plan aims to set out a framework for the physical development of the County, so that growth may take place in a co-ordinated and orderly manner, while at the same time conserving its intrinsic character and amenity.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Council recognises the importance of the River Shannon as a major tourist resource and recreational asset. The Council's policy will be to protect the landscape and views of special interest and also to encourage the development of Shannon bridge, Banagher and Shannonharbour as focal points. Commercial development which would compete with these centres will where feasible, be directed towards the centres. It will also be Council policy to investigate the possibility of providing a Linear Park based on the River Shannon from Banagher to Meelick.

The Council recognises the recreational value of the Grand Canal and it is intended to preserve its attractiveness by carefully controlling development in order to protect its amenity and tourism potential. It is the Council's policy that developments which require vehicular access from public roads which were

formerly towpaths or from existing towpaths along the Grand Canal will not be permitted. The development of the canal in relation to walking, cycling, coarse fishing and cruising will however be encouraged.

Within the Offaly County Development Plan a number of views are protected along both the Grand Canal and River Shannon. A number of structures are also listed for preservation within the Study Area.

Town plans for both Ferbane and Banagher are included within the County Development Plan.

Galway County Development Plan 1997-2002

Aims: The County Development Plan has four main stated aims. These are:

- (1) To comply with the requirements of the Local Government (Planning & Development) Acts 1963-2000, in respect of the making of a development plan for the county of Galway.
- (2) To actively participate in the economic growth of the region by planning for the provision of the demographic, infrastructural, environmental protection and land use planning of the County.
- (3) To provide detailed information for prospective investors, property owners and developers in the county, to assist them in the preparation of applications for planning permission.
- (4) To provide the public at large with an information base on the major activities of the County Council.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Council aims to protect water quality in order to maintain and enhance the development of special interest tourism activities, such as bathing, angling and aquatic sports. There are a number of Proposed Natural Heritage Areas, as designated by the Council, within the Study Area, these are River Shannon Callows, Clonfert Cathedral and Kilnaborris Bog.

Tullamore Development Plan 1998

Aims: The basic aim of the Plan is to set out a framework for the physical development of the town so that growth may take place in a co-ordinated and an orderly manner, while at the same time conserving the town's intrinsic character and amenity.

Relevance to the Study Area: The Council recognises that there is potential for vastly increased boat traffic on the Grand Canal. In this respect it will where possible, liaise with other bodies who have responsibility for the Canal. Specifically the development of stopping and associated facilities at the canal basin, harbour area and at Ballydaly will be welcomed by the Council. Use of the towpath walking route from Clondalkin to Tullamore will increase if accommodation and leisure facilities are provided in Tullamore. It is the policy of

the Council to examine the potential of, and promote the use of the Grand Canal as a local amenity feature and a significant tourist attraction for the town. A number of action area plans / urban renewal initiatives and access developments are proposed in the plan for the canal corridor.

OFFALY AND KILDARE WATERWAYS

This is a partnership between voluntary and public bodies across Kildare and Offaly. Its role is to promote, facilitate and co-ordinate the social, economic and environmental regeneration of the grand canal and Barrow line and the surrounding communities.

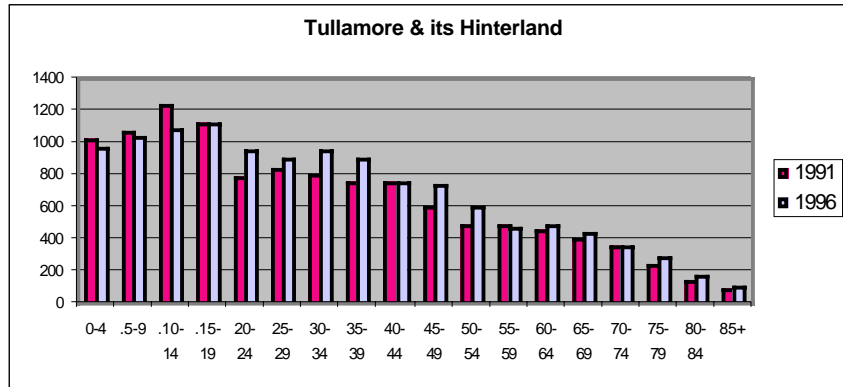
It has a particular role in promoting awareness of the canal amongst local communities and can facilitate local development, management and enhancement initiatives. It has recently launched an education programme aimed at realising the potential of the waterways.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

East Galway and West Offaly are among the least populated and economically undeveloped areas of Ireland. Primary industry in the form of agriculture (primarily livestock) and peat harvesting dominates the economic sector. The population, typical of rural Ireland and the midlands in particular, is in decline, with urbanisation and out-migration prevalent. The Study Area includes a variety of settlement types and sizes, with various connections to the waterways.

Tullamore

The County town of Tullamore is the largest settlement within the Study Area and has a far reaching influence on surrounding settlements in terms of their economic and physical development. According to the Tullamore Town Development Plan 1998 Tullamore provides a greater level of services than is required to meet the needs of its own population and has an estimated shopping catchment of 40,000 persons. The Grand Canal bisects the town and is integral to its urban structure, although recognition of the canal as an amenity and heritage resource, as well as potentially a catalyst for development, is limited. **Tullamore and its hinterland** consists of the DEDs of Tullamore Urban, Cappancur, Durrow, Tinnycross and Tullamore Rural. In 1996 the combined total of population within these DEDs was 12,269 persons, an increase of 6 per cent over the 1991 population of 11,564.

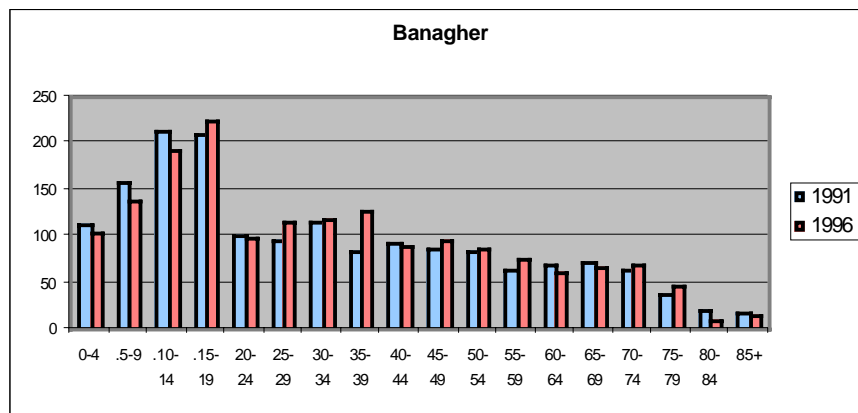


The age profile of Tullamore and its hinterland is illustrated above. The declining numbers under the age of 20 and increasing persons over 20 years of age suggests a high level of in migration due to increased employment opportunities, infrastructural improvements and housing development in the area.

Tullamore and its hinterland experienced a decline in unemployment of 9 per cent over the period 1991-1996. Agricultural employment within Tullamore and its hinterland has declined from 7 per cent of those employed in 1991 to 5 per cent in 1996. Both manufacturing and professional services employment showed increases of 2 per cent during this period.

Banagher

Banagher is situated on the eastern bank of the River Shannon at one of the two crossings of the river in the Study Area. The town provides services to a wide catchment, much of which lies in County Galway. This is the second largest settlement within the Study Area with an increasing population from 1,685 persons in 1991 to 1,719 persons in 1996. Over the same period the average household size fell from 3.41 to 3.28 persons. The changing age profile of Banagher between 1991-1996 is illustrated below.



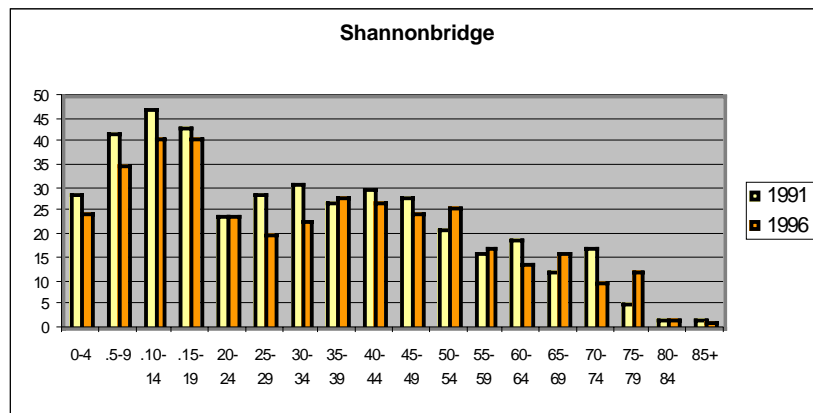
Banagher has a thriving navigation related tourism industry which currently attracts 50,000 to 60,000 visitors per year. This sector has experienced the

strongest growth with an increase of 4 per cent between 1991 and 1996. Overall however, unemployment increased in the area over the same period from 6 per cent to 8 per cent. Other sectors experienced minimal changes with a 1 per cent decline in agricultural, commercial and mining employment and a 1 per cent increase in manufacturing.

An Action Area Plan has been prepared for Banagher by Offaly County Council and Shannon Development to guide the development and consolidation of the town close to its historic core. It emphasizes the quality and historical integrity of the existing town center and its main built assets and the need to avoid ribbon development along key approaches. It further supports the ongoing development of the waterfront area, marina and associated historical buildings as part of the consolidation of the tourism product in the town.

Shannonbridge

This settlement is similar to Banagher in that it is located on the rise of an esker at the point at which the River Shannon bisects it. Much smaller in scale than Banagher Shannonbridge is nonetheless intricately linked to the river in proximity, urban form and use. Shannonbridge has experienced the largest decline in population within the Study area of 9 per cent, from 424 persons in 1991 to 387 persons in 1996. The graph below illustrates a declining younger population and increasing persons in the older age cohorts.



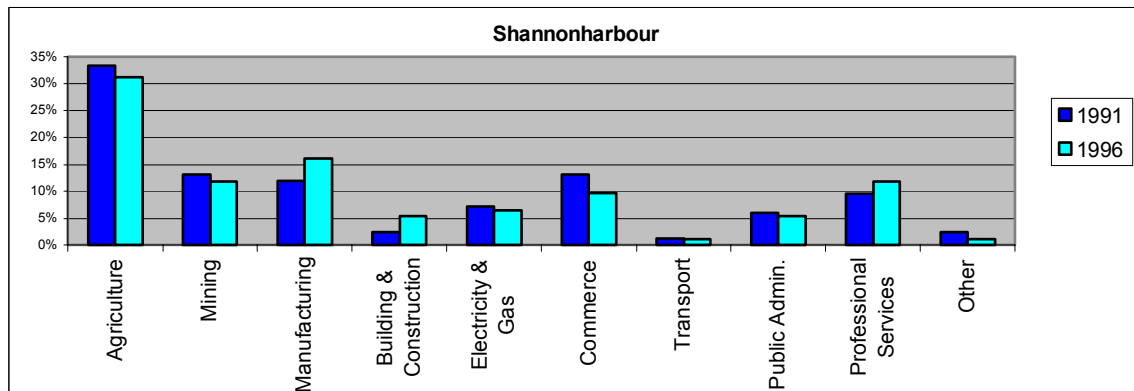
Shannonbridge was the only settlement within the Study Area, to experience an increase in agricultural employment during the period 1991-1996, rising by 4 per cent, to 20 per cent of those employed. Manufacturing employment increased by 6 per cent and those employed in commerce declined to by 4 per cent. Unemployment increased in Shanonbridge between 1991-1996 from 6 per cent to 9 per cent.

Shannonharbour

Of the lesser settlements associated with the waterways only Shannonharbour and Pollagh can be said to be situated on the waterways (the Grand Canal in both cases). Shannonharbour is dominated by navigation related buildings and

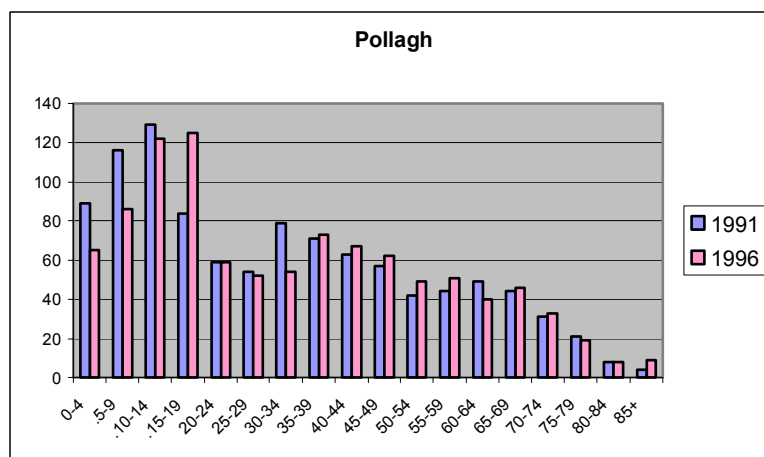
uses. The town has not developed beyond that function since its foundation however and its condition and outlook remains intricately linked to the waterways, the Canal in particular. Shannonharbour experienced an increase in population between 1991-1996 of 2 per cent, from 285 persons to 291 persons. An analysis of the distribution of this growth throughout the population shows that the largest increases were experienced in the 5-9 and 15-19 age cohorts.

Between 1991-1996 unemployment in Shannonharbour remained static at 7 per cent. Agricultural employment in Shannonharbour declined by 2 per cent, and manufacturing employment experienced the greatest increase rising by 4 per cent. The graph below illustrates the percentage of those employed by sector.



Pollagh

Pollagh, a dispersed settlement in the midst of the west Offaly peatlands, has its core along the northern bank of the Canal, comprising a church, school, post office, several houses and a pub. The population of this settlement declined by 2 per cent between 1991-1996 to 1,020 persons.

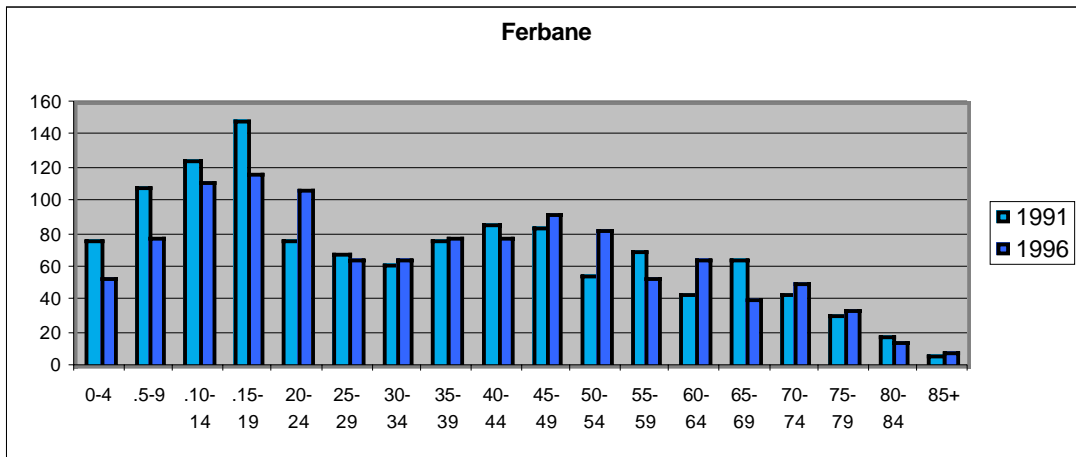


The above graph illustrates declines in the younger cohorts with an increasing older population suggesting a high level of out migration.

Unemployment numbers within Pollagh declined over the period 1991-1996, by 9 per cent, to eighty six persons. Those employed in agriculture declined by 4 per cent, which those employed in manufacturing increased by 4 per cent to 28 per cent of those employed.

Ferbane

Ferbane and the villages of Belmont, Rahan and Ballycommon are all situated within 1 km of the Canal with currently tenuous links to the waterways in the form of a pub or scattered houses adjacent to the Canal. Between 1991-1996 the population of Ferbane fell by 4 per cent from 1,238 to 1,190 persons. According to the Ferbane Town Plan 1996 population studies undertaken by the Council indicate that the population of Ferbane and its immediate environs will increase up to the year 2006. This projection anticipates that the population will have reached 1,491 persons by 2006. The age profile of Ferbane is illustrated below.



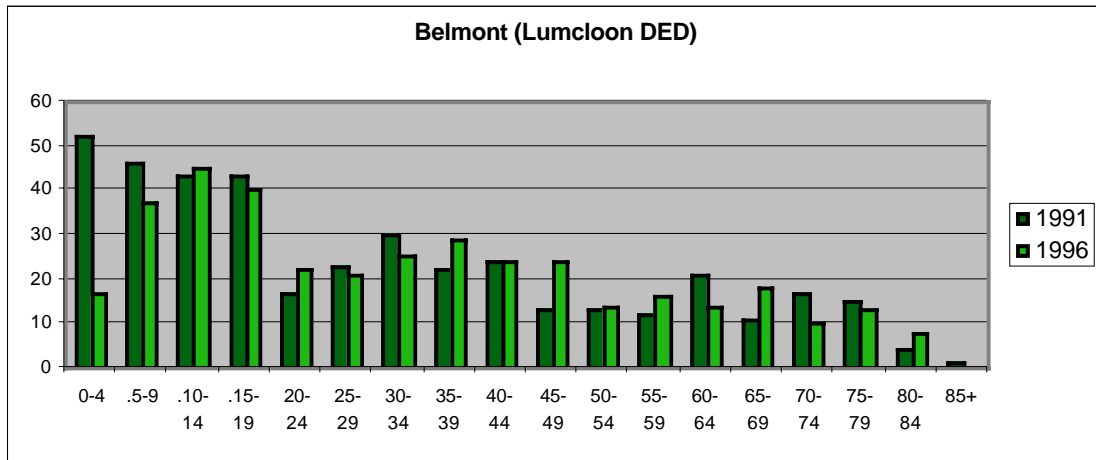
The above graph illustrates a declining younger population and an increasing older population, reflecting a decreasing average household size in the area having declined to 3.2 persons in 1996 from 3.45 persons in 1991.

As Ferbane is one of the larger settlements within the Study Area the number of jobs required is significantly larger than to cater for the workforce of Ferbane alone. Unemployment is a major problem in the town and is due to a large extent to the marked decline in peat related employment opportunities in the area. In 1991 15 per cent of the workforce was employed in agriculture, by 1996 this had declined to 11 per cent. Over the same period manufacturing employment had increased from 19 per cent to 22 per cent and services employment had increased from 12 per cent to 14 per cent.

Belmont

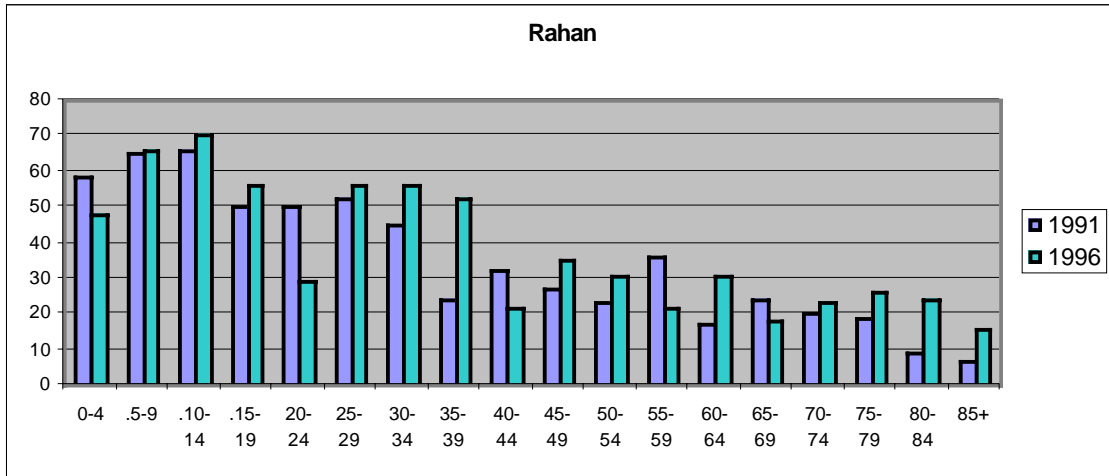
Belmont had a population of 377 persons in 1996, a decline of 7 per cent on the 1991 figure of 407. The graph below illustrates a sharp decrease in those within the 0-4 age cohort reflecting a decreasing birth rate and falling household sizes.

Unemployment in Belmont has remained at 9 per cent between 1991-1996 although there has been a sectoral change. Agriculture remained the largest employer from 1991-1996 however it did decline from 27 per cent to 22 percent of those employed. Manufacturing employment also declined from 20 per cent to 13 per cent, and the services industry increase from 5 per cent to 11 per cent.



Rahan

Rahan's population increased by 9 per cent during the period 1991-1996, from 624 persons to 681. Most of this growth is distributed throughout the older age cohorts as illustrated below. The proximity of Rahan to Tullamore has resulted in this increase attributable to in migration, as is apparent from the increase in the older cohorts.

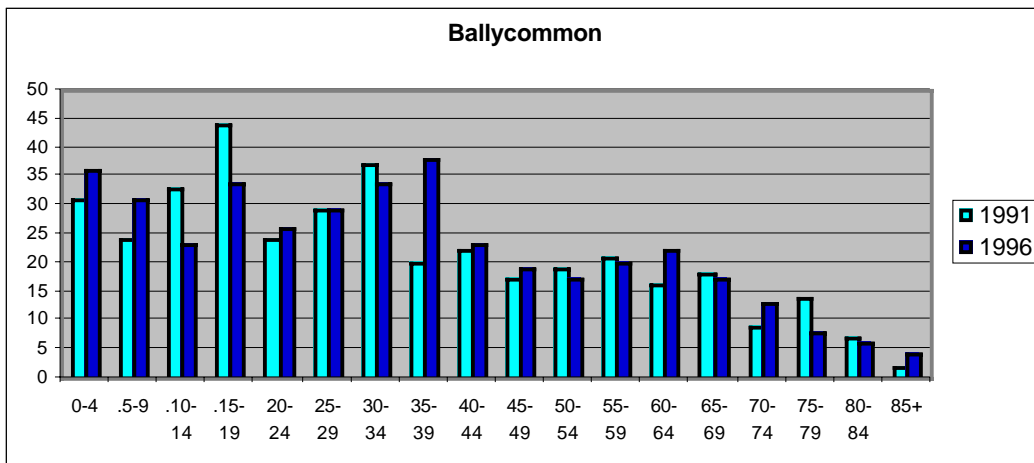


Unemployment in the settlement increased from 4 per cent in 1991 to 6 per cent in 1996. The agricultural sector was the largest sector of those employed in 1996 at 24 per cent, declining from 27 per cent in 1991. Manufacturing employment was increasing from 21 per cent to 23 per cent over the same period.

Ballycommon

Ballycommon experienced an increase in its population of 3 per cent from 387 in 1991 to 400 in 1996. The graph below illustrates a growth in the younger population with the largest increase in the 35-39 cohort suggesting in-migration due to the settlements proximity to Tullamore.

Unemployment in Ballycommon was at 5 per cent in 1996, a rise of 1 per cent over the 1991 figure. Both agricultural and manufacturing employment, as a percentage of those employed, suffered a decline during this period. Agriculture decreased from 23 per cent to 20 per cent and manufacturing, the largest employment sector, decreased from 26 per cent to 21 per cent.

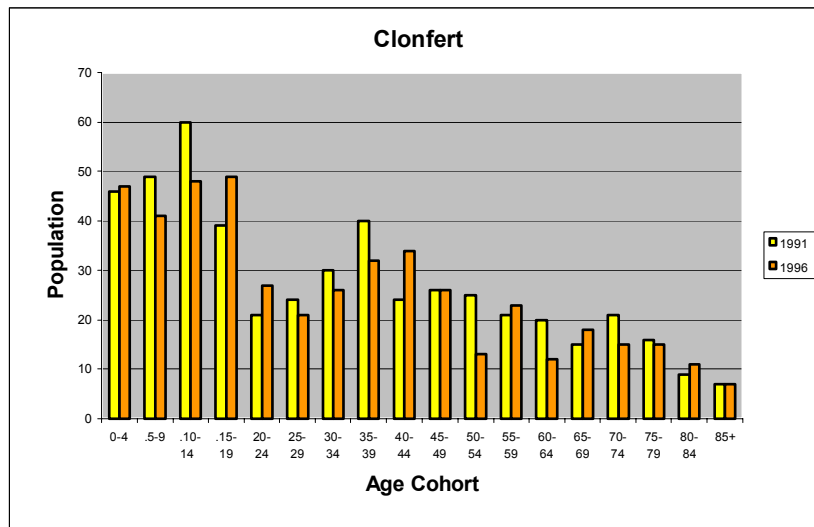


Eyrecourt

In County Galway to the west of the River Shannon, the broad callows and extensive peatlands have not allowed for settlement of the lands adjacent to the river. The nearest town to the river is Eyrecourt, with a population 548 in 1996. It is situated some 4.5km north west of Meelick, too far from the river to have any discernible relationship with the waterway. Local people have raised the issue of sewerage from the town into the local river which feeds the Shannon, this is unacceptable in pollution terms but also a constraint on the proper growth and development of the village.

Clonfert

Clonfert, the site of Clonfert Cathedral and a celebrated centre of learning in the 16th century, is a scattered settlement people surrounding the cathedral and the Emmanuel House of Providence, a Catholic centre of prayer. Peatlands separate the village from the river, but it provides a cultural historic amenity for river users and was situated specifically for its proximity to navigation. Between 1991-1996 Clonfert had a declining population from 473 to 465 persons. A decline in the younger age cohorts was apparent, reflecting a decrease in household sizes.



Unemployment in Clonfert declined significantly between 1991-1996 from 13 per cent to 5 per cent. In 1996 agriculture remained the largest employer in the area, although those employed within this sector had declined from 43 per cent in 1991 to 29 per cent in 1996, of those employed. During the same period those employed in manufacturing increased by 3 per cent and those employed in services increased by 5 per cent.

Development Pressure

Development pressure along the Grand Canal is concentrated in and around the existing settlements, with Tullamore and its environs to the east and west along the Canal (between Rahan and Lock 24) most sought after, especially for

residential development. These applications are predominantly for sites along existing roads; these approach or cross the Canal at Rahan, Ballycowan (Lock 29), Tullamore and Digby Bridge (Lock 25). Most affected are two roads heading east from Tullamore parallel to the Canal. These are developing rapidly as residential and commercial spines, with one-off housing predominant. A Land Use and Transportation Study is currently being undertaken for Tullamore UDC which will address issues of growth of the town and its environs with regard to land, transport and infrastructure particularly in the context of the growth and future development of the Greater Dublin Area and the publication of the National Spatial Strategy.

A small number of sites adjacent or close to the Canal in Pollagh and Belmont have been the subject of planning applications in the last five years, mostly for one-off housing, extensions, septic tanks, etc. Shannon Harbour has seen applications for similar uses including two developments of multiple residential units. The extensive peatlands to the south and north of the Grand Canal between Pollagh and Shannonharbour are likely to become cutaway (i.e. peat deposits exhausted) incrementally over the next thirty years. Current Bord na Mona policy suggests that these lands will be converted to forestry and pasture if conditions permit, or wilderness in areas with lesser productive potential.

Along the River Shannon, there have been applications for navigation related developments in both Banagher and Shannonbridge e.g. a marina development, floating jetties and fishing platforms. Banagher has experienced considerable development since 1996 with residential development predominant in the form of holiday homes, townhouses and small scale apartment schemes. The land in between the settlements, being subject to seasonal flooding, is under no pressure for development. Four planning applications for additions and alterations to the existing power station, adjacent to the river just south of Shannonbridge, have been received by Offaly County Council, along with one for an additional power station adjacent to that.

Development pressure in the County Galway portion of the Study Area is limited. A small number of planning applications have been received for dwellinghouses in Clonfert since 1996 and several applications for navigation related developments, e.g. mooring berthage for eighteen pleasure craft, were received for Banagher Bridge. Several applications for minor works at Meelick have been received by Galway County Council. The remainder of the area comprises mostly peatlands and marginal agricultural land.

The most significant planning development in this area is likely to occur in approximately twenty years time as the Bord na Mona peatlands immediately west of the Callows between Banagher and Shannonbridge become cutaway. The selection of after use of these peatlands might be influenced by the proximity of this large area of land to the environmentally sensitive River Shannon and the callows.

INVENTORY OF TOURISM FACILITIES IN THE WATERWAY CORRIDOR

GALWAY

Eyrecourt (population 548)

Accommodation (Bed & Breakfast)

- Cashlawn House, The Square, Eyrecourt
- Lynchs Farmhouse, Mayour, Eyrecourt
- Betty McElroy (no address)

Public Houses

- Diamonds Lounge
- Donnellan Peter
- Earner Mi John, Main Street
- Horans Bar, Main Street

*There are no Licensed/Unlicensed restaurants in Eyrecourt

Other Attractions

- Eyrecourt Vintage Machinery Festival – held annually in June

Additional Services

- There is a Post Office, Garda Station and a school within Eyrecourt

Laurencetown (population 420)

Accommodation (Bed & Breakfast)

- Clonmany House, Lismany, Laurencetown

Public Houses

- Pardys Bar, Lounge & Grocery
- The Beautiful Bird – Bar & Lounge

Shops

- Fordes Grocery & Hardware
- Glynn's Post Office & Grocery

Activities

- Fishing – Salmon, Trout, Pike & Other course fish (Laurencetown acts as a base for fishing holidays)
- Equestrian – Flowerhill House, Killmor, Ballinasloe – A holiday farm and centre for cross country riding, hunting, trail riding, horse sales, horse preparation, shooting and fishing.

Other Attractions

- Laurencetown May Festival

Additional Information

- Laurencetown has a G.A.A. club

Clonfert (population 465)

Attractions

- Clonfert Cathedral – Listed in 'Monument Watch' as one of the worlds top 100 most endangered monuments,

Additional Services

- The village of Clonfert has a post office
- * There are no Public Houses, restaurants or accommodation within Clonfert village.

Meelick (population 248)

* The village of Meelick was also researched and was found to have no attractions or services. However it is a recognised area for fishing

OFFALY

Ballycommon (population 400)

Public Houses

- McGrath Gerry & Maria

*There are no other services provided within Ballycommon

Banagher (population 1,719)

Accommodation

- Crank House Hostel, Main St
- Honey Lodge, Lusmagh.
- The Old Forge, Westend.
- Hayes B&B, Main Street.
- Lakyle, Shannon Harbour Cross.
- Sleepy Hollow; Taylors Cross.
- Ashling, Cuba Avenue.
- Glebe Self-Catering, Lecarrow, Glebe.
- Keeraun Hill.
- Lime-Kilin Self-catering, Corgrave South, Lusmagh.

Activities

- Horse-riding, Fishing, Golf, Boating, Tennis, Pitch & Putt, Birr Castle Demense, Clara Bog Rail

Public Houses

- Corrigan's
- Flynn's
- Houghs JJ
- Lyons William
- Lyons Martin Railway Bar
- Nallens

- The Vine House

Restaurants

- There is one licensed restaurant within Banagher

Belmont (population 257)

Accommodation

- Heavins B&B, Moystown.

Activities

- Golf & Tennis

Public Houses

- Kelly Vincent

*There are no Licensed/Unlicensed restaurants in Belmont

Cloghan (population 824)

Accommodation

- Denan House, Birr Road.
- The Gables, Castle St.

Activities

- Horse riding, Fishing, Golf, Tennis, Birr Heritage Centre is located nearby.

Public Houses

- Cloghan Inn
- The Drift Inn
- Harkin Francis
- The Lodge
- The Ramblers Inn
- Tierney MI

*There are no Licensed/Unlicensed restaurants in Cloghan

Ferbane (population 1,190)

Accommodation

- Darragh, Ballyclare.
- Highfield House, Rosfaraghan.
- Dealbhna Eathra, Gallen.

Activities

- Horse-riding, Fishing, Golf, Tennis

Public Houses

- Hineys

Restaurants

- There is one licensed restaurant and one unlicensed restaurant within Ferbane

Shannon Harbour (population 291)

Accommodation

- Old Rectory, Deerpark.
- The Harbour Masters House:

Activities

- Horse-riding, Fishing, Golf, Tennis, Water Sports

Public Houses

- Killeen Jas J

*There are no Licensed/Unlicensed restaurants in Shannonharbour

Shannonbridge (population 387)

Accommodation

- Ashbrook Farmhouse.
- Rachra House, Shannon View.
- The Bungalow, River View.
- Laurel Lodge.

Activities

- Horse-riding, Fishing, Golf, Tennis

Public Houses

- Bridge Bar
- Killeens
- Lukers
- Maises

Restaurants

- There are 3 licensed restaurants within Shannonbridge

Additional Information

- Shannonbridge has a G.A.A. club

Tullamore (population 9,221)

Accommodation

- Annaharvey House, Annaharvey.
- Cherryfield House, Leabeg Boora.
- Coreen House, Spollanstown.
- Ivy Lodge, Daingean Road.
- Dinnis Cottage, New Road.
- Canal View Country House, Killina, Rahan.
- Pine Lodge, Ross Road.

- Shepherds Wood, Screggan.
- Rahan Lodge.
- Ballinamona Farm, Ballinmona.
- Gormagh, Durrow.
- Oak Lodge, Charleville Road.
- Littlewood, Culleen, Durrow.
- Moorhill House, Clara Road.
- Sea Dew Guesthouse, Clonminch Road.
- Bridge House Hotel, Bridge Street.
- Tullamore Court Hotel, O' Moore St.

Activities

- Horse-riding (Riding Centre), Fishing, Golf, Tennis, Bicycle Hire, Indoor Swimming Pool

Public Houses

- | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|
| • The Blue Ball | • Georgies Bar & Lounge | • Monor Lounge |
| • The Brewery Tap | • The Goal Post | • McCormck Paddy |
| • Bridge House | • Hamilton's | • McGrath Gerry |
| • Chracters Bar & Lounge | • Hanlon Eamon G | • O'Reily C |
| • Colgan Thos PC | • Kelly's Roadhouse | • Offlay Inn |
| • Digan Ray | • Kellys Annie | • Pat's Bar |
| • Doyle Matthew | • Keyes Bar & Lounge | • Smyth Robt |
| • Eoan Kathleen | • The Lantern | • Spollen J & O. |
| • Eugene's | • Lee Jos | • Whitehouse Bar |
| • Flynn Pat K | • Lynch Hugh | • Wyers |
| • Franks Pub | • MacGabhann's | • The Hole in the Wall |

Restaurants

- There are 18 licensed restaurants and 5 unlicensed restaurants within Tullamore

N.B. Population figures are taken from the Census 96 (Central Statistics Office, Ireland)